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[SIBYL ACQUAINTS ALICE WITH THE DEATH OF GOLDSWORTH LEE.]

SIBYL LEE.

CHAPTER I.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the mists begin and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The port of the foe,—
There he stands, the Arch Fear, in a visible form,
Yet the rich man must go!
For the journey is done, and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight, ere the guardon be gained,
The reward of it all!

Browning.

The night wind swept, chill and gusty, around the mansion where Goldsworth Lee, one of England's merchant-princes, lay on his death-bed.

For days his feet had seemed trembling on the verge of the great shadow-land, and the paving-stones of the aristocratic street where he lived had been covered to deaden the sound of the few carriage-wheels which might pass, while hired commissioners paced noiselessly in front of the house, or stood watchful at the corners. The door-bell was muffled; the physicians and menials came and went with stealthy steps; but no caution, however rigid, could silence the wind that moaned around the mansion, and rattled the crimson-draped windows as mercilessly as if they belonged to the humble homes of the poor. No care, however vigilant, could ward off the presence which comes alike to palace and cottage: the death angel had crossed the threshold, and stood waiting in Goldsworth Lee's chamber.

It was a grand old room, and presented that strong contrast of light and shadow which Rembrandt and some other great masters loved to paint. A heap of embers in the polished grate shed a red glow on the marble hearth, the tufted rug, and the elaborate carving of the Carrara chimney-piece; while the small argand lamp, burning on a mosaic table, revealed the dim splendour of the carpet, the hangings, the tall cheval glass, the solid mahogany, and various evidences of wealth and taste we cannot pause to

describe: for Goldsworth Lee, though the most selfish and exacting of men on "Change, was a Sybarite in his own home.

A fall of damask, which looked like a mass of sunset clouds by day, but seemed dusky as a funeral pall now, was knotted back from the sumptuous couch where the sufferer lay, surrounded by his physicians and a nurse who had grown old in the service of his family.

Doctor Thornleigh held his gold repeater in one hand, while he counted his patient's pulse, and watched the slumber which had for a brief time lessened his suffering. Suddenly Goldsworth Lee looked up, exclaiming, with an impressive gesture:

"Alice! Alice! do not stand there so pale and stern. I cannot bear your reproachful eyes, so like your dead mother's. 'Tis true, I wronged you; but I have repented. I am a better man than you think me. I will atone!"

"Sir," rejoined the physician, "you are wandering. Nobody is here but your good nurse Hepsie, and we doctors."

Goldsworth Lee glanced vacantly at him, and shook his head, muttering:

"Aye, you mistake; I see a face, a figure at my bed-side, and have ever since I have been ill—fair-browed, blue-eyed, and golden-haired, it stands before me; and that is not all—it has haunted me many a month, following me to the wharves where my vessels were unloading, to the banks where my gold was stored, and into my chamber at nightfall."

He spoke with such solemn earnestness that the hearts of the listeners thrilled, and Hepsie's tears fell fast over her sorrowful cheek, while her sobs sounded dimly through the death-chamber.

All this time, a tall, slender woman, with a pair of keen, glittering eyes—and these, with her magnificent black hair, forming the chief charm of her pale, inscrutable face—had stood in a little ante-chamber, divided from the principal room by a cloud of purple drapery. At the mention of that name, Alice, she started; her fingers worked nervously among the heavy tassels she had grasped; and as he proceeded, a flush crimsoned her cheek, and her breath came in short gasps.

"Hepsie," she heard Goldsworth Lee resume in a low tone, but still distinctly audible to her, "I cannot die till I have confided a secret to you."

"A secret!" muttered the lady in the ante-chamber. "Goldsworth Lee is a madman." And sweeping aside the drapery, she glided into the room. Pausing by the bed-side, she murmured in the most musical of voices:

"Goldsworth, dear Goldsworth, I have come." The physicians glanced round, and perceived a distinguished looking woman standing by their patient, with a heavy black cloak wrapped about her as gracefully as if it had been the drapery of a statue, and her hood falling back so as to reveal the wealth of her midnight hair.

The trio bowed, and the eldest of them exclaimed:

"A sister of Mr. Lee, no doubt?" "No," rejoined the lady; "I had hoped to stand in a nearer relation to him, but God has ordered it otherwise." And tears gathered in those glittering eyes.

"Oh! Sibyl!" were the only words the dying man could find strength to articulate; but after a moment's conference, he turned to them and continued: "Leave me—I would be alone with my betrothed wife!"

The physicians willingly acquiesced; but Hepsie's face was ominous as she left her master.

"No good will come of her being by his death-bed," she muttered to the housekeeper, as she joined her in the kitchen; and the two sat down to talk of the snare into which they believed the strange woman had drawn their master during the brief time he had boarded at her sea-side cottage the previous summer.

When the doctors and Hepsie had gone, Sibyl Talbot bent over the sufferer, and murmured:

"It cannot, cannot be you are dying, dear!" "You must meet the truth, Sibyl—I shall not see the morning light."

"But is there no hope?" "None; my disease is incurable."

"Oh! dearest, I wish we had never, never met!" "And why?"

"I was leading my life of loneliness and toil, when

you came to shed cheer and sunshine. In your presence I forgot that I was poor, and that hardship and privation were around me, and dared to love you as devotedly as if I had been your equal. Now, now it will break my heart to part with you, go back to toil, care, and self-sacrifice, with no thought of you to solace me."

"Sibyl, Sibyl, you are far too beautiful and well-bred for your position, but I shall draw my last breath more freely if I know you are beyond the possibility of want—beyond the necessity of labour. I will summon a servant, and send for a clergyman; and here, by my death-bed, our marriage shall be solemnized, dearest."

The woman's eyes kindled with triumph, but he did not notice their expression; and it was well for her purposes that he was thus blinded to her real character. He rang the bell, and when a servant appeared, exclaimed:

"Go at once for Dr. Craig—tell him to hasten here without delay."

The menial seemed surprised beyond measure, but he obeyed his master's mandate, and another called the physicians to witness the ceremony to be performed.

Hepsie was furious, but she dared not interfere—those glittering eyes well nigh paralysed her, and she withdrew again to the kitchen, where she expressed her opinion in plain terms.

In a half-hour the clergyman arrived, and declared himself in readiness to solemnize the rite.

Sibyl Talbot had taken off her heavy cloak, and in her neat lavender silk, with a single white rose in her hair, seemed bridelike enough for such a wedding. She had bolstered up Goldsworth Lee against a mass of pillows; and thus, with the shadow of the Death-Angel lying dusky around them, their marriage vows were plighted. Then the clergyman and physicians retired, and the dying man was left alone with his newly-wedded wife.

"And now," asked Sibyl, "what can I do for you?"

"Listen—I have but little time, and I must improve it."

"Go on—I am all attention."

"Well, yonder, under the shadow of the ancient Abbey, in a humble street—in a rickety old building where the poor huddle together—there lives a young girl in whom I am deeply interested. A dark, stern woman is her protectress, and knows, I dare say, most of her history. In a cabinet in my library—an ebony cabinet, inlaid with pearl—you will find a written confession of her claims. When death stared me in the face, conscience unbraided me for the wrong I had done her, and I resolved to change my will, and divide my wealth equally between you. But I have not been able to attend to it, and therefore I have here written out my wishes."

He handed her a folded paper, then fell back exhausted upon his pillow, and gasping for breath, went on.

"Promise me—promise me Sibyl, you will see justice done the girl, known as Alice Hunt!"

"I will; your wishes shall be dearer than my own, and perhaps we may be happy together when you are gone."

With this artful reply she banished his fears; the next instant his spirit had flown to the land where the poor and the rich stand as equals.

While these events were transpiring, a far different scene was being enacted in an old tenement in a mean street in Westminster. From the stately home of Goldsworth Lee we turn to the room tenanted by Alice Hunt and her protectress. The building afforded what served as a home for several families, and swarmed with flocks of ragged children, slatternly women, and men in various stages of untidiness; but this chamber was as unlike the surrounding ones as if it had been a thousand leagues distant. Odd bits of carpeting had been nailed down till the floor was quite covered; the wood-work and windows had been scrubbed, and the furniture was neat and well-kept. A geranium and a few roses blossomed on the window-ledge; a canary warbled in a cage above, and a Maltese cat purred contentedly on the hearth-stone. A young girl, with a cheek like the heart of a blush-rose, eyes like the steadfast blue of the summer sky, and lips which, though a thought too grave for her years, were ripe and red, sat embroidering by a low table. At length the door unclosed, and Margaret Harding, her protectress, entered.

"Well, Alice," she said, lay down your work and hear the news."

"What is it?"

"Goldsmith Lee, the merchant-prince, lies dying—he cannot live till morning."

"But that does not concern us. If he had ever befriended us, or were to leave us a part of his thousands, we might take an interest in him."

The woman stood for a time silent; then she bent over the girl's chair, and rejoined:

"Goldsworth Lee's death ought to concern you, Alice Hunt; if a human heart throbs within him, conscience will not let him die as he has lived, with self for his god. Hark ye, child—though you are poor, and he a merchant prince, you are akin to him!"

"Impossible, Margaret!"

"Strange as it may seem, I speak the truth; I never have trifled with you, and I would not now for the price of my life. I have been dumb on family secrets, but to-night my lips are unsealed. Goldsworth Lee's blood flows in your veins, proud as it is! Go to the dying man's house; tell the servants you are a relative, and wish to see him in his last hours; and enter his room, not like a thief, but like a person who is determined to have her rights. If he asks your name, tell him simply Alice! and that Margaret Harding sent you to his death-bed; the rest I am willing to trust to you and to heaven."

"Oh, Margaret, I cannot, cannot go! I am not fit for these things; and if he should be harsh, I should feel like sinking into the earth."

And she buried her face in her hands and shuddered.

"Alice," continued the woman, "it was but yesterday you were longing for the means of educating yourself—of being something more than a poor seamstress, and more on equality with one I could name; this may be your last chance of rising in the world."

The girl looked up into Margaret Harding's face, and replied:

"'Tis a hard task for me; but I will go."

And putting on her simple cloak and bonnet, she gravely kissed her protectress, and left the room.

Picking her way down the rickety staircase, and through the dim and narrow passages, she emerged from the house, and darted on fearful she might lose her courage if she stopped.

The wind deepened the colour on her cheek, and blew her bright hair in careless curls about her face; but it was a raw, uncomfortable night, and but few were abroad in that region to notice the beautiful girl going alone on her strange mission. As she came in sight of the house, her heart beat quick at the thought of certain walks beneath grand old trees, and she could not help wondering whether her present mission would have any effect on her future prospects.

At length, she paused on the broad steps of Goldsworth Lee's mansion, and gave a timid ring.

The door unlatched as softly as if it had turned on air, and, in a few tones, Alice inquired if Mr. Lee was still living.

"Yes," replied the porter, "I think so; at least, he was a few minutes ago."

"I am a relative of his," observed the girl, "and should like to see him before he dies."

"Come in, then," said the servant; and, like one in a painful dream, Alice glided into a spacious hall, up a staircase, and through rooms and corridors, all richly carpeted, and filled with splendours which dazzled her unaccustomed eyes.

On the threshold of the chamber, which had witnessed a death and a bridal that night, she met Sibyl, the bride of an hour.

"Who are you?" demanded the woman, sternly, "that you come here at such a time?"

"My name is Alice Hunt, madam. I have a message for Mr. Goldsworth Lee, and must deliver it before he dies."

The lady stood gazing at her with her keen, glittering eyes, in which a thousand stormy passions were mirrored; but her face was as calm and inscrutable as ever, when she rejoined:

"Goldsworth Lee is dead—you have come too late!"

And she turned sharply from her, and moved back to the fire, where her husband's letter and confusion were already burning.

Mechanically, Alice Hunt passed out of the door of that stately mansion, and returned to her own home. Pale, grave, and silent, she stole into the room where Margaret Harding sat at work.

"Speak out!" she cried; "I am dying of suspense. What—what has happened?"

"Oh, Margaret, I was too late! I found Goldsworth Lee dead."

The woman started from her seat with an expression of keen disappointment on every feature, and her voice was hollow and unnatural when she exclaimed:

"Who told you so?"

"A tall, slender woman, with splendid black hair and eyes, that I met as I was going into his room."

"Good heavens! You are describing Sibyl Talbot—if she has been with him in his last hours, there's no hope for you, child. Listen! I can't rest till I know the truth of the matter; Hepsie, the nurse, is a friend of mine, and she will let me into Goldsworth Lee's chamber—I will not believe it till I see him."

With these words, she folded a cloak about her, and hastened away.

An hour afterwards, she stood in the luxurious chamber, where, solemn and still, the dead man lay. Standing there in the "gorgeous gloom" cast over her by the purple canopy—with the carved mahogany, the curiously-veined marbles, and the crystal mirror gleaming lustrous in the lamplight, there arose before her the humble little room, and all the struggles and privations of sweet Alice Hunt. Her feet sank deep into the rich, golden-hearted panes of the carpet, and a bitter smile curled her lip as she exclaimed:

"The rich man has faded away in his ways! Goldsworth Lee has gone where his wealth cannot weigh a feather's weight."

The next moment she heard the rustling of Mrs. Lee's silken robe, and she and the unbidden guest met face to face in the presence of death.

"Margaret Harding!" she exclaimed, speaking involuntarily; for, subtle as she was, she had feared such an interview.

"And you—you are Sibyl Talbot," rejoined the woman.

"Sibyl Lee, if you please, madam. A short time previous to his death, we were married."

"I am aware of the fact; but if you wish to live in peace, you will see justice done. You must understand Alice Hunt's claims, and Hepsie tells me she has, before you came, she talked of her face haunting him by day and by night."

"I cannot answer for a dying man's delirious fancies," rejoined the lady, with freezing hauteur.

"And do you pretend to deny that conscience did not drive him to make reparation?"

"If he did, he committed no such plan to me. Should it be as you hint, it will be seen when his will is read at the funeral."

"Sibyl Lee, I always thought you false and unprincipled. I believe you would sacrifice anything to secure wealth; but I shall follow this up, and if no provision is made for Alice Hunt, I shall say, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

As she spoke, she cast a last glance at the white still face, and left the mansion of the dead merchant prince, Goldsworth Lee.

CHAPTER II.

ALL the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
Shakespeare.

THE curtain had just fallen on the last act of "Kendilworth." The gorgeous pageantry, which had changed like the varying scenes of a magic mirror, had disappeared; the gas had been turned down; the velvet-cushioned boxes were vacant; pit, orchestra, and balcony were alike desolate; and even the green-room had but a single occupant.

There, with the folds of her stage-dress still sweeping about her in cumbrous richness, sat Agnes Edgecombe, the star of the theatrical season. Unlike most actresses, she wore no rouge, and now that the excitement was over, light and bloom had died away from her beautiful face. Fair and statuesque as marble, it gleamed in the dim lamp-light, for he it known, that off the stage Agnes Edgecombe was denominated an iceberg, a statue. No wild heart-beat made her jewelled stomach-ride and fall; no tumultuous emotions painted themselves on the features, as delicate in their chiselling as if they had been the master-piece of some old Greek sculptor, and the white flingers had no tremor as she trifled with the costly hot-house flowers lying in her lap.

Suddenly a sound startled her. What could it be? Had her retirement been invaded by a presumptuous suitor, or was her friend, the stage-manager, stealing in to remind her it was time for him to close the theatre?

No, no; as she rose and listened, opening the door of the green-room meanwhile, she could hear a half-suppressed sob. It could not be the call-boy, for he had performed his office, and departed; and no disconsolate actor would be guilty of such weakness. Whence, whence came that sob?

Gliding across the stage, she glanced around the lonely theatre. Nought was to be seen; but as she stood in breathless silence, the same diabolical sounds drew her attention to the dress-circle; and what was her surprise and dismay when she found, crouched among the crimson-velvet cushions, a ragged, bare-foot child, with a wan, wistful face, framed in by a mass of dark hair!

"In heaven's name," cried the actress, "what brought you here?"

The child looked up with a bewildered air, and rejoined:

"Do not be angry, madam; I read the play-bills a week ago; I saw you when you came to rehearsal in your carriage; but I had no money, nobody to buy me a ticket, and so I crept in to-night when the great door was opened. The crowd carried me along, and

were too eager to get their seats to notice me. I stole under the seat where you found me, and watched and listened while you were on the stage; when you were gone I nestled down and fell asleep. At last I woke, to find not a single face in sight; I thought I was alone in the dark, lonesome theatre, and I could not keep back the tears, madam."

"Ah! it is no place for you, child," observed the actress.

"I know it; but I could not stay away from—from you, madam."

"And did you enjoy the play?"

"More than I can tell—it must be a fine thing to be an actress!"

"Some day you may change your opinion," was the low reply; "but since you are in trouble, you had better come with me."

With these words, she clasped the child's hand and led her to the green-room. Closing and locking the door, she took a long survey of her face, with its great, dreamy, brown eyes, its classic brow, and the lips, which seemed too serious for a child.

Then the gorgeous stomacher throbbed above the throes of the stormy heart beneath; a burning flush surged over cheek, neck and forehead; the hands locked and unlocked nervously—the fair statue had kindled into life, and passion, and despair. In her own history, Agnes Edgcombe was realizing agony more keen than she had ever depicted in the hours when she trod the boards of the theatre, a tragic queen!

She had buried the past, as she thought, writing on its tomb-stone a solemn *"Requiescat!"* but now, at the sight of this squalid, barefoot child, it rose and confronted her, stern as destiny itself.

"What is your name?" she asked, addressing the child.

"Catherine—Catherine Francis Oliver; but the children call me Kitty, and Kate; and the Waits and my father, Fan."

Miss Edgcombe drew a quick, gasping breath, and murmured, in a tone too low to be audible to the child:

"Catherine—Catherine—Oh, my God!"

For a time no other word was spoken; but the white hand, on which jewels glistened like frozen dew, wandered almost caressingly amidst the child's elf-locks.

At length she continued, speaking with a slow, spasmodic utterance:

"Where is your home? Tell me all you can about it, and—your father and mother."

"My mother I can't recollect; but I have seen the grave where they tell me she sleeps in the burying-ground, and sometimes I go there and long to be beside her."

"There are colder graves in the hearts of many who are admired and envied," muttered the actress, sotto voce; and then, gazing at her companion, she added:

"A burial-ground is a dismal place, and most people shrink from it."

"But, madam, it is far pleasanter than the crowded stifling streets; and I lay my aching head on the sod, and cover it with the wild flowers I find when they send me into the country."

"Poor child! I hope your mother was worthy of your love."

"I cannot tell; but when my father is present, I cannot mention her name. He wishes me to forget her, I am sure."

Agnes Edgcombe rose, and paced the green-room with a step and manner which no tragic acting could have equalled; but finally she came back, and, resuming her seat, said:

"Go on with your story, little Kate; you were speaking of your father—where is he now?"

"He has gone, and it seems as if I had grown years older since he left me. We were poor enough when he was here; but a few weeks after he started I had a long and terrible illness. Every penny was spent, and one by one our household goods, and the last decent frock I had, went. When my aunt died, a neighbour took me into his family; and such a place, madam, you never saw—damp, and dark, and filthy; and yet with so many of us crowded in, we can scarcely breathe."

"You do not like the people you are with, Katy?"

"No!" was the energetic reply. "I hate them! Mr. Wait is kind in his rough way; but his wife gives me kicks and cuffs, and sets me tasks I can't do, till I believe I am the wretchedest little girl in the world."

The tears of the actress fell fast as she listened; but, when a footfall struck her ear, she dashed them away, as if ashamed of her emotion.

"Miss Edgcombe," said the stage-manager, pausing outside the door; and she listened to open it.

"I came to say," he resumed, as she appeared on the threshold, "that it is high time the theatre was locked. If it should take fire, I should be in a pretty

box were it known you remained so late. Besides, your waiting-maid is quite out of temper; and your coachman asleep on the box. Your letters are written, I suppose. Why, what is this?"

And he cast a keen glance at Catherine.

"A little girl, sir, heard of my fame, and stole into the theatre, where she fell asleep. When she awoke she was frightened and bewildered, and I have been trying to soothe her."

"Ahem!" he observed; "I cannot find it in my heart to scold her—she is such a pitiful object; she must have had hard fare in the world."

"Yes, yes. Come, child, I believe I will take you home."

"Take her home?" cried the man, in dismay.

"What will be said when it is rumoured that the iceberg, the statue, has been guilty of philanthropy like this?"

"It matters not; I am my own mistress."

"Well, well. Where are your letters?"

"I have written none; the manager must wait."

And folding a heavy cloak over her stage-dress, she swept with a royal air from the green-room, the barefoot child's hand still clasped in hers.

As she passed her old friend, he seized her arm, and gazing searchingly into her face, exclaimed:

"There are tears in your eyes. What has happened?"

"Do not ask—I cannot tell you; but one thing I crave."

"What is it?"

"Do not reveal what you have seen to-night."

"Never fear; it is not the first secret I have kept for you."

The actress looked the thanks she could not find voice to speak, and hastened down to the entrance by which she usually made her egress. As she emerged from the theatre, a sturdy man sprang forward, exclaiming:

"Here you are, runaway! Wait has gone, and his wife has sent me to bring you back, for Nell Daly told us you had got a taste for play-going, and crept into the theatre to see the play. Ha! ha! ha! you'll have to take a sound beating, for your mistress is in a perfect fury."

The actress remonstrated, but in vain. The villain was firm in his purpose; and at length she said:

"Go, Katy; it is better, on the whole, to obey now."

"'Tis hard to leave you, madam," sobbed the child.

"It will be blotting out everything bright and beautiful in the world!"

"I will not lose sight of you; I promise you that, on my honour." And she added, in a whisper:

"There, there; good night, and God bless you!"

The impulse was strong upon her to part the matted curls and kiss the child's brow; but curious eyes were gazing upon her, and she resisted it.

With oaths and ill-timed ridicule, Tom Nelson dragged the reluctant Kate homeward.

The actress watched them for a few moments, with an undefinable expression on her face, and then drew down her thick veil, and stepped into the carriage, followed by her waiting-maid.

The woman began a flippant harangue about the little girl, but Miss Edgcombe silenced her, and the drive to Miss Edgcombe's residence at Brompton, an elegant but unpretentious villa, was exceedingly uncomfortable to all parties.

When the popular actress had gained her own private sitting-room, she said, calmly:

"I shall not require your services, Jane; I am not yet ready to retire, late as it is."

The servant withdrew in silence, and, as she took her way to her bedroom, muttered:

"I daresay Miss Edgcombe is going to study a new part, for that always makes her cross, and 'tis well for me it don't happen often. I wonder who that bold little piece was the stranger took off home in spite of my mistress? She must have taken a great fancy to the brat, for they seemed quite hand and glove. But," and she tossed her head triumphantly, "I'll set my wits to work against her. This shall be the last time they meet; for my lady's old clothing and other favours are for me."

While Jane was scheming as adroitly as an accomplished court intriguer, Agnes Edgcombe was alone in her dressing-chamber. It was no new part she was learning that night from the pages of some dramatic author. No, she was turning the leaves of her own heart, and conning no novel lesson—to suffer and be calm. The solitude of her room was peopled with memories no spell could exorcise. Try as she would, she could not banish their haunting presence. Every hour, as if dragged by, left its shadow on her brow, its burden on her soul; and morning found her with a fever burning in her veins.

On being admitted, Jane brought half-a-dozen exquisite bouquets, and three perfumed letters, sealed with lover's mottoes; but the actress tossed them all

disdainfully into a silver basket near, and endeavoured to frame an apology for her appearance.

The day wore dimly on, and at three o'clock she drew her invalid writing desk before her, and wrote as follows:

"DEAR SIR,—I am ill, and cannot play to-night. Please excuse me, for the sake of our old friendship, and oblige
"AGNES EDGCOMBE."

A servant was despatched to deliver the message, and ere long there was a vehement rap at the door of Miss Edgcombe's room. Jane answered the summons, and the manager of the theatre appeared. Stalking across the room, he paused beside the sofa on which the actress was reclining.

"You received my note," observed the tragedienne.

"Yes, yes; I see your face is flushed, your eyes are unnaturally bright, and your hands hot and dry. I suppose I must release you. You have created such a furor it will be perfectly ruinous. Everybody is on the *qui vive*. The box office was crowded this morning, and every ticket sold before twelve o'clock."

There had been times when praise of her fame would have been sweet to Agnes Edgcombe, but now her triumphs were as the apples of Sodom, and she would have given all her fame for rest and peace.

After a short interview the manager retired, muttering his regrets that she should take it into her head to be ill when there was so much at stake. Perhaps he had not intended to be unkind, but the words roused Agnes from her feverish lethargy. She ordered a cup of strong coffee, and when she had drunk it, turned to her waiting woman and said:

"Dress me, Jane. I am going to the theatre."

"My lady, it would be madness! You are in a high fever!"

"Never mind that; I must play Elizabeth to-night."

Bring out the robe I laid aside when I came in, the crown, the stomacher, and the stiff ruff. Powder and roll my hair, and make me look every inch a queen."

The woman obeyed, and the toilette was at length completed. The manager looked surprised, but pleased, when she made her appearance in the green-room and said:

"Here I am, sir; your financial ruin shall not be on my head."

A half-hour later she was on the stage, superb in her queenly grace, terrible in her anger towards the unfortunate Amy, and clinging in her heart of hearts to the gallant earl who had been the love of her womanhood.

The theatre was thronged with the young, the rich, and the gay; but on the stage, where she was breathing out all her passionate despair—in the pit, the boxes, and balcony, she could see but one face—the face of little Kate, the ragged, barefoot child, who, it would seem, could not have claimed even a smile from the flattered and followed Agnes Edgcombe, the brightest star of the theatrical world.

(To be continued.)

THE LAST OF OLD BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE.—The demolition of Blackfriars Bridge goes on rapidly, and the structure is now a mere wreck—9 feet in perpendicular depth, measuring from the level of the former parapets, having already disappeared. The stone and other materials are lowered into barges moored in the river at several points, and are then taken away. During the removal, it has been made clear that the necessity for closing the old bridge was not decided upon a day too soon. The only wonder is that it held together so long, considering the enormous traffic to which it has been constantly subjected. In order safely to secure their object, the contractors have had recourse to every practicable plan suggested by modern engineering skill, and have adopted the use of a timber "gantry" of enormous strength, which will be continued completely across the river from the Surrey to the Middlesex shore, and upon which rails are laid for a new description of "steam traveller," for lifting the masonry and removing it from its former bed. Gangs of workmen are employed day and night in fixing the piles, and up to the present time no accident has occurred to any person employed upon the works.

THIRTEENPENTY-WORTH OF MARRIAGE.—Marriage at one shilling and a penny sterling cash, and without asking leave of parents and guardians, seems very much like a revival on a grand scale of Gretchen Green. The proceeding is narrated to us as follows:—The other day a young gentleman from England arrived in Airlie, where he had a sweetheart whom he had been wooing for some time. He had received a sudden call to proceed abroad; but previous to his departure he was desirous of converting his innamorata into a wife, and taking her along with him. The lady was nothing loth; but there was no time to spare for the pre-nuptial of the bands—a necessary preliminary to procuring the services of a minister to tie the knot. At length the parties, advised by one of the burgh lawyers, declared themselves man and wife in the Royal Hotel. This, it seems, being an irregular marriage, is

an offence in the eye of the law, and the couple, now united, were brought up before Baillie Thomson, and pleading guilty to what they had no wish to deny, were amerced in the not very serious penalty of one merk Scots, or about 1s. 1d. sterling, besides having the fact of their marriage unmistakable by its being placed on record in the court books.

ANCIENT AND MODERN HUMBUGS OF THE WORLD.

No. 10.—Ghouls—Phantoms—Vampires—Conjurors—Divining—Goblins—Fortune-Telling—Magic—Witches—Sorcery—Obl—Dreams—Signs—Spiritual Mediums—False Prophets—Demonology.

THESE are too many things to dispose of in one letter, but I want to say a few words about them collectively. The subject of ghosts, haunted houses, witchcraft, and supernatural business of all kinds, is one so full of humbug from beginning to end, that I cannot in justice pass it over in a single chapter. Indeed, when we consider the pernicious effects of a belief in hobgoblins, witches, and similar "supernatural" follies, it seems a matter of duty to devote a series of papers to their exposition.

Whether superstition is the father of humbug, or humbug the mother of superstition (as well as its nurse), I do not pretend to say; for the biggest fools and the greatest philosophers can be numbered among the believers in and victims of the worst humbugs that ever prevailed on the earth.

As we grow up from childhood, and begin to think we are free from all superstitions, absurdities, follies, belief in dreams, signs, omens, and other similar stuff, we afterward learn that experience does not cure the complaint. Doubtless much depends upon our "bringing up." If children are permitted to feast their ears night after night (as I was) with stories of ghosts, hobgoblins, ghouls, witches, apparitions, it is more difficult in after life for them to rid their minds of the impressions thus made.

But whatever may have been our early education, I am convinced that there is an inherent love of the marvellous in every breast, and that everybody is more or less superstitious; and every superstition I denominate a humbug, for it lays the human mind open to any amount of belief in any amount of deception that may be practised.

One object of these letters consists in showing how open everybody is to deception, that nearly everybody "hankers" after it, that solid and solemn realities are frequently set aside for silly impositions and delusions, and that people, as a too general thing, like to be led into the region of mystery. As Hudibras has it:

Doubtless the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated as to cheat;
As lookers-on feel most delight
That least perceive a juggler's sleight;
And still the less they understand,
The more they admire his sleight-of-hand.

I shall hereafter show that the amount or strength of men's brains have little to do with the amount of their superstitions.

The most learned and the greatest men have been the deepest believers in ingeniously contrived machines for running human reason off the track. If any expositions I can make on this subject will serve to put people on their guard against impositions of all sorts, as well as foolish superstitions, I shall feel a pleasure in reflecting that I have not written in vain.

The heading of this letter enumerates the principal kinds of supernatural humbugs.

It is astonishing to reflect how ancient is the date of this class of superstition (as well as of most others, in fact), and how universally they have prevailed. Nearly thirty-six hundred years ago, it was thought a matter of course that Joseph, the Hebrew Prime Minister of Pharaoh, should have a silver cup that he commonly used to do his divining with; so that the practice must already have been an established one.

In Homer's time, about twenty-eight hundred years ago, ghosts were believed to appear. The Witch of Endor pretended to raise the ghost of Samuel, at about the same time.

To-day, dreambooks are sold by the dozen; fortune-tellers regularly advertise in the papers; a haunted house can gather excited crowds for weeks; abundance of people are uneasy if they spill salt, dislike to see the new moon over the wrong shoulder, and are delighted if they can find an old horse-shoe to nail to their doorstep.

There are hundreds of haunted houses—that is, of those reputed to be such, and have been for hundreds of years. In almost every city, and in many towns and country places, they are to be found. There are great numbers in Europe; but whoever heard of the ghost of an Indian? And as for the ghost of a black

man, evidently it would have to appear by daylight. You couldn't see it in the dark!

A very ancient and impressive specimen of a haunted house was the palace of Vauvert, belonging to King Louis IX. of France, who was so pious that he was called Saint Louis.

This fine building was so situated as to become very desirable, in the year 1259, to some monks. So there were forthwith horrid shriekings at night-times; red and green lights shone through the windows; and, finally, a large green ghost, with a white beard and a serpent's tail, came every midnight to a front window, and shook his fist and howled at those who passed by.

Everybody was frightened—King Louis, good simple soul! as well as the rest. Then the bold monks, appearing at the nick of time, intimated that if the king would give them the palace, they would finish up the ghost in short time.

He did it, and was very thankful to them besides. They moved in, and, sure enough, the ghost appeared no more. Why should he?

The ghosts of Woodstock are well known. How they tormented the Puritan Commissioners, who came thither, in 1649, to break up the place, and dispose of it for the benefit of the Commonwealth! The poor Puritans had a horrid time. A disembodied dog growled under their bed, and bit the bed-clothes; something invisible walked all about; the chairs and tables danced; something threw the dishes about (like the Davenport "spirits"); put logs for the pillows; flung bricks up and down, without regard to heads; smashed the windows; threw pebbles in at the frightened commissioners; stuck a lot of pewter platters into their beds; threw dirty water over them in bed; banged them over the head—until, after several weeks, the poor fellows gave it up, and ran away back to London. Many years afterward, it came out that all this was done by their clerk, who was secretly a royalist, though they thought him a furious Puritan, and who knew all the numerous secret passages and contrivances in the old palace. Most people have read Sir Walter Scott's capital novel of "Woodstock," founded on this very story.

The well-known "Demon of Tedworth," that drummed, and scratched, and pounded, and threw things about, in 1661, in Mr. Mompesson's house, turned out to be a gipsy drummer and confederate.

The still more famous "Ghost in Cock Lane," in London, in 1762, consisted of a Mrs. Parsons and her daughter, a little girl, trained by Mr. Parsons to knock and scratch very much after the fashion of the alphabet-talking of the "spirits" of to-day. Parsons got up the whole affair, to revenge himself on a Mr. Kent. The ghost pretended to be that of a deceased sister-in-law of Kent, and to have been poisoned by him. But Parsons and his assistants were found out, and had to smart for their fun, being heavily fined, imprisoned, &c.

A very able ghost indeed, a Methodist ghost—the spectral property, consequently, of my good friends the Methodists—used to rattle, and clatter, and bang, and communicate in the house of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, the father of John Wesley. This ghost was very troublesome, and utterly useless.

I must add two or three short anecdotes about ghosts. They illustrate very handsomely the state of mind in which a ghost should be met. One is, that somebody undertook to scare Cuvier, the great naturalist, with a ghost having fire in an ox's head. Cuvier woke, and found the fearful thing glaring and grinning at his bedside.

"What do you want?"

"To devour you!" growled the ghost.

"Devour me?" quoth the great Frenchman. "Hoofs, horns, guminivorous? You can't do it—clear out!"

And he did clear out.

A pious maiden lady, in one of our villages, was known to possess three peculiarities. First, she was a very religious, honest, matter-of-fact woman. Second, she supposed everybody else was equally honest; hence she was very credulous, always believing everything she heard. And third, having "a conscience void of offence," she saw no reason to be afraid of anything; consequently, she really feared nothing.

On a dark night, some boys, knowing that she would be returning home alone from prayer-meeting, through an unfrequented street, determined to test two of her peculiarities, viz.: her credulity and her courage. One of the boys was sewed up in a huge shaggy bear-skin; and as the old lady's feet were heard pattering down the street, he threw himself directly in her path, and commenced making a terrible noise.

"Mercy!" exclaimed the old lady. "Who are you?"

"I am the —!" was the reply.

"Well, you are a poor creature!" responded the antiquated virgin, as she stepped aside and passed by the strange animal, probably not for a moment doubt-

ing it was his satanic majesty, but certainly not dreaming of being afraid of him.

It is said that a tin-pedlar, who had frequently cheated most of the people in the vicinity of a village through which he was passing, was induced by some of the acute ones to join them in a drinking-bout. He finally became dead-drunk; and in that condition these wags carried him to a dark rocky cave near the village, then, dressing themselves, awaited his return to consciousness.

As he began rousing himself, they lighted some huge torches, and also set fire to some bundles of straw and three or four rolls of brimstone, which they had placed in different parts of the cavern. The pedlar rubbed his eyes, and seeing all these evidences of pandemonium, concluded he had died, and was now partaking of his final doom. But he took it very philosophically, for he complacently remarked to himself:

"In —; just as I expected!"

P. T. B.

(To be continued.)

TO THE BREEZE IN SUMMER.

Come, O thou life-breathing breeze, from the billow!
Come, for the flowers are sighing for thee!
Why dost thou linger so long with rude ocean?
Hast thou forgotten for ever the lea?
Hast thou forgotten the calm stately mountain?
Dost thou remember the still vale no more?
Hast thou a feud with the summer-time fountain?
Is there a hate between thee and the shore?

Come, and they'll bless thee!

Come, for the country is sick with its longing;
Come, for the city is waiting for thee:
Look how they're stretching their dusty hands out-ward

Where thou art wooed by the far selfish sea!
Hast thou no pity? no memory remaining
Of all the glad time with the forests of yore?
Hearst thou the low, almost hopeless, complaining
That sobe from the breast of the flame-smitten shore?

Hark! there's a soft, mellow, musical murmur!
Look! there's a crinkle along yonder sea!
Blessings, deep blessings, cool breeze, be thy wel- come!

Rapture and thanksgiving chorus with thee!
Now thou art cooling the grateful, hot mountain!
Now thou art kissing the valley once more!
Now thou art tossing in love the old fountain!
Millions are rising to thee on the shore!

Life-Giver, all bless thee! W. N. W.

BRANDING IN THE ARMY.—We understand, upon good authority, that His Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief has seen fit to issue a Circular from the Horse Guards, by which the present very objectionable plan of branding soldiers is removed. When the necessity for marking a soldier occurs, the operation is to be performed by the drum or trumpet-major, at the orderly-room, in the presence of the Adjutant, and under the immediate supervision of a Regimental or Staff Medical Officer. This is as it should be; and we congratulate the profession that a medical officer no longer occupies a derogatory and false position, and the Duke of Cambridge that he has had the good sense to concede an alteration which was very urgently required.

TEA BRANDS AND THEIR MEANING.—The following will interest housekeepers:—"Hyson" means "before the rains," or "flourishing spring," that is, early in the spring; hence it is often called "Young Hyson." "Hyson skin" is composed of the refuse of other kinds, the native term of which is "tea skins." Refuse of still coarser descriptions, containing many stems, is called "tea bones." "Bohea" is the name of the hills in the region where it is collected. "Pekoe," or "Poko," means "white hair," the down of tender leaves. "Pewchong," "folded plant." "Seouchong," "small plant." "Twankey" is the name of a small river in the region where it is bought. "Congo," from a term signifying "labour," from the care required in its preparation.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.—Anecdote, on the authority of Sir Gregory Way, illustrative of the utter impassiveness of the Duke of Wellington in critical moments, and of the electrical influence on his troops of a few telling words clearly and decisively uttered.—A column of some 12,000 Frenchmen was pushing up a slight eminence, on which a small British force was posted, under the immediate command of Lord Wellington, who allowed the enemy to "approach so near that we felt uneasy—we all watched his eye. He just then called out, 'Come, can't you give them a touch?' Our men rushed forward—they had the advantage of the ground. The French were broken in a moment. Our attack was like a stream of lava from the mountains, overwhelming all that opposed it."

ANECDOTE OF SIR WILLIAM NAPIER.—He was one day taking a long country walk near Freshford, when he met a little girl, about five years old, sobbing over a broken bowl; she had dropped and broken it in bringing it back from the field to which she had taken her father's dinner in it, and she said she would be beaten on her return home for having broken it; then, with a sudden gleam of hope, she innocently looked up into his face and said: "But yee can mend it, can't yee?" My father explained that he could not mend the bowl, but the trouble he could, by the gift of sixpence to buy another. However, on opening his purse it was empty of silver, and he had to make amends by promising to meet his little friend in the same spot at the same hour the next day, and to bring the sixpence with him, bidding her, meanwhile, tell her mother she had seen a gentleman who would bring her the money for the bowl next day. The child, entirely trusting him, went on her way comforted. On his return home he found an invitation awaiting him to dine in Bath the following evening, to meet some one whom he specially wished to see. He hesitated for some little time, trying to calculate the possibility of giving the meeting to his little friend of the broken bowl and of still being in time for the dinner-party in Bath; but finding this could not be, he wrote to decline accepting the invitation on a plea of a "pre-engagement," saying to us, "I cannot disappoint her, she trusted me so implicitly."—*Life of General Sir Wm. Napier, K.C.B.*

THE STEPMOTHER.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Be sure you prove my love is false!
Be sure of it!

Shakespeare.

AFTER the newly made husband had left his bride, she examined more particularly the appointments of the house, and admired the almost feminine delicacy Pierre had exhibited in the selection of the furniture and ornaments. Her bed-chamber, especially, excited her admiration, the carpet being snowy white, thickly covered with exquisite pink buds, shaded by green leaves, and so heavy that her feet sank into the thick pile. The low French bedstead was draped in the most snowy of linen and Marseilles, the curtains were of white lace, over plain pink silk, and the dressing-table was similarly decorated. The chairs, sofa, ottomans, and easy chair were covered with pink uncut velvet, and pink and white hot-house flowers filled rose-coloured vases on the white mantel-piece.

"How charming!" she thought. "This room is a perfect bower of beauty! I am wicked and ungrateful in not being able to cast Harry out of my heart, but I hope I shall soon be able to love Pierre as he deserves."

She completed her examination of the various rooms, and then went down to the parlour, throwing herself on a sofa, to muse over her changed fortunes and prospects. Suddenly she heard the door-bell ring; and thinking that Pierre might have returned for something he had forgotten, she arose and went to the door herself, opening it—to find herself face to face with Mrs. Willis!

The surprise of each was beyond description! During the past month, Mrs. Willis had not seen her nephew, and had been nearly wild with the constant thought of what he might do to revenge himself upon her for the assault she had made upon him, in conjunction with her husband. Unable longer to bear the suspense caused by his silence, she had that very morning made a desperate resolution to visit him at his house, and ascertain his feelings and intentions in regard to herself, and if possible effect a reconciliation with him.

The despair, then, that entered her heart on beholding Esther in Pierre's home, can be imagined. "You here!" she gasped. "What are you doing in Pierre's house?"

Esther perceived the wildly anxious expression on the face of her stepmother, and her voice was cold and proud, as she answered:

"I am here, madam, because I am Mr. Russell's wife. We were married this morning."

Mrs. Willis uttered an exclamation of horror, and seemed about to sink to the floor in an apoplectic fit. The next moment she staggered further into the hall, and sank upon a chair in a fainting condition.

"Married!" she ejaculated hoarsely, as soon as she was sufficiently recovered to speak. "Is it possible?"

Esther bowed, and said:

"Mr. Russell has gone out, and intends calling upon you before his return."

"The will!" gasped Mrs. Willis, in alarm. "He has the will?"

Esther assented.

The miserable woman gave a despairing groan, and covered her face with her hands.

Esther had no wish to witness the retribution that had overtaken her stepmother, and said:

"You will excuse me. Mr. Russell will be probably waiting for you at your house."

As she finished speaking, she went into the parlour, resuming her seat on the sofa. She was almost instantly followed by Mrs. Willis, who stared at her splendid attire and lovely face a moment, as if she were seeing her for the first time, and then exclaimed:

"Esther—"

"Mrs. Russell, if you please," returned Esther, quietly.

"Mrs. Russell, then. You have been entrapped into this marriage, at last! Let me tell you that your husband is a consummate villain—"

Esther interrupted Mrs. Willis with dignity, rebuking her for such an accusation.

"It is true," went on her stepmother, half-mad with her discovery. "Since he has ruined us, we will ruin him! He stole the will from Mr. Clayville's desk before your father died. I hired him to do it, promising him fifty thousand pounds, and he kept the will, hoping to marry you and get the whole property."

"You will make nothing by such charges," said Esther, shocked at the statement. "I have no belief in them. You but waste your breath."

"It is the truth," cried Mrs. Willis, vehemently. "He made all the trouble between you and Harry, lying to each about the other. Harry is the soul of honour, and loves you as well to-day as he did when you were at Elmwood."

Esther recoiled, as if smitten by a sudden blow, but managed to say, calmly:

"I know better. I had the good fortune of being admitted to your back parlour once, where I overheard and witnessed a love scene between Harry and Elinor. His very words showed that he no longer loved me, or had basely deserted me with the loss of my fortune."

"That scene was planned beforehand, between Pierre and Elinor," said Mrs. Willis, recklessly. "I knew of it at the time. After you went away, Harry expressed his indignation at Elinor's conduct. We all knew that Harry never turned from you for an instant."

Elinor did not believe this assertion, but a sickening sensation came over her as she listened to it. There had been times during her more intimate acquaintance with Pierre when his softness and gentleness had seemed to her all hollow and artificial; but these moments had been few, and she had steadily conquered them.

She remembered them now, and a faint doubt of his truth and genuineness crept into her soul. She repressed it, and said:

"But Harry is engaged to Elinor?"

"He is, but—"

"That is enough. That statement contradicts the rest."

Mrs. Willis heaped accusations upon Pierre, until stopped by the indignant bride, when she said:

"Come and know for yourself, Mrs. Russell. You say Pierre is coming round to see me. You can conceal yourself in the back parlour, as you did before, and I will accuse him. You shall be convinced from his own lips."

Esther thought a moment, and replied:

"I will go, if only to put you to shame for your base calumnies. I can return with my husband. I know not what motive you may have in making these statements, and asking me to come to your house; but I will go there to rejoice in Pierre's vindication from your foul aspersions. I shall come with a friend; and I give you fair warning that any scheme of violence you may have formed against him or myself will be thwarted."

The thought had occurred to Esther that Mrs. Willis might again assault Pierre, and the principal motive inducing her to go was the reflection that she and her friend would be a protection to him should he be alone in his visit.

"Only come," replied Mrs. Willis, "and you may bring whoever and as many as you please."

After a few words more against Pierre, and wild ravings in regard to her own future, Mrs. Willis returned to her carriage, which was in waiting, and drove away.

Without changing her dress, Esther hastily donned her bonnet and cloak, and left the house, thinking to herself that Pierre would be pleased to have her disprove the falsehoods of Mrs. Willis so promptly and fully.

She went out, and took a cab, riding down as far as the Rev. Mr. Sutton's, where she alighted. She met the clergyman at his door, and briefly stated to him that a woman had been maligning her husband, and had invited her to witness a scene between them, and that she was going to bring confusion upon the accuser.

"Quite right," said Mr. Sutton, smiling. "That is the way for wives to act; and I am glad to see, Mrs. Russell, that you are jealous of the honour of your husband, thus putting into practice the very precepts I gave you this morning. Can I be of any assistance to you?"

"If you would go with me," said Esther, "it would be a great kindness to me. The woman is, I really believe, thoroughly bad, and she has assaulted him once, locking him up in her cellar, with the threat of starving him to death. I thought our presence might prevent another attack upon him, and indeed that was my motive as much as to vindicate his honour."

Mr. Sutton approved her resolution, and signalled a cab, and the two were soon at the residence of Mrs. Willis.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Short is the date in which ill acts prevail,
But honesty's a rock can never fail. Steele.

Mrs. Willis drove rapidly homewards after leaving Esther, and found Elinor in the sitting-room awaiting her return, and anxious to hear the result of her visit. She immediately broke out into lamentations, and said: "Oh, Elinor! Pierre has actually married Esther! She came to the door herself! I never was so horrified in my life! We are completely ruined! Pierre has gone to see a lawyer, and is coming here to dispossess us! We are beggars!"

She flung herself into a chair, wringing her hands and groaning fearfully.

Elinor echoed her mother's grief, overwhelming her with questions, and finally saying:

"What are we to do?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied the miserable woman. "I won't give it up yet; but all is lost of the Willis property. Oh, if Pierre had only died—if we had known enough to put him out of the way the very night he secured the will! We could have found it easily enough then! Unless you secure Moreland to-day you have lost him for ever."

Elinor compressed her lips, and her bold, black eyes assumed a defiant expression. She was about to say something, when she heard a heavy step in the hall, which she recognized as that of Jerry Stropes. Not wishing to meet him, she went into the adjoining room, and thence hastened to her own chamber.

Of late, liking the house so well, Jerry Stropes had remained in the mansion of Mrs. Willis, as her brother-in-law, enjoying himself at her bounteous table, but taking care not to force his society upon Moreland. On the contrary, he carefully kept out of his way, although questioning Mrs. Willis often as to the reason why she wished Elinor to marry Harry.

Having heard his wife's entrance, he had now come down to question her as to success.

"Well, Dolly," he said, on entering the room, where Mrs. Willis lay crushed and helpless in her chair, "did you play your game well? Have we fooled that 'are Pierre'?"

"He has fooled us!" retorted Mrs. Willis. "He has married the girl! We'll have to quit!"

Jerry was stunned by this announcement, having flattered himself that his wife would be successful; and he now reproached her for not having got rid of the girl, or of Pierre, a month before.

"It can't be helped," said Mrs. Willis, savagely; "and there's one comfort, if I have to lose the property, I shall be rid of you!"

"Perhaps not, my lady," was the response. "But I'll go back up-stairs till you get better natured or kin think of a plan to get back the money."

He went out, with his hands in his pockets, and ascended the stairs.

Mrs. Willis strove hard to control herself, and had partially succeeded, when the door-bell rung.

She answered it herself, admitting Esther and Mr. Sutton.

"Come in," she whispered, leading them into the front sitting-room, and thence to the back one. "If you'll remain quiet, whatever you hear, you will soon know to whom the falsehood in the case attaches. You will see that Pierre is far more guilty than myself, far more guilty than you, Mrs. Russell, can possibly deem me. I would have made up with Pierre this morning when I called at his house. Now nothing remains but to expose him. Keep quiet, I beg of you, until he has gone, and listen intently."

She returned to the front room, leaving the sliding doors slightly ajar, and seated herself to wait for Pierre's coming.

On finding herself stationed in the back apartment with the clergyman, Esther took the precaution of placing the key of the door opening into the hall on the inside, and turning it, so that no one could enter the room from that direction.

She then seated herself by the aperture between the doors, Mr. Sutton remaining by her side.

During the brief silence that followed, Esther had ample opportunity to scan the still handsome, though

perturbed and anxious face of her stepmother. The sight of it was not pleasant to her, however; and she was about to arise from her seat, when the front room door opened, and Elinor entered her mother's presence, dressed for a walk. Her person was glittering with jewellery, and a travelling bag she carried in her hand seemed to be stuffed out with valuables—as it really was.

"I am going down to Harry's office, mother," she said, flinging one end of her Cashmere shawl over the bag, and concealing most of her jewellery, "to see if I can't bring him to terms. He proposed to me because I actually asked him to, and out of sheer spite to Esther, and I believe he intends to creep out of it. He's continually snivelling about Esther, and told me last night that he wrote to her every day for a week or so after she came to town, and never received a line from her—"

"Hush! for heaven's sake!" interrupted Mrs. Willis, with a startled glance toward the folding doors.

"Oh, there's no use of mincing matters," Elinor went on, in reckless discontent. "It seems that Pierre has succeeded in his plot, but we have done nothing in ours. The question must be settled this very day. If Harry is ever going to marry me, he must be quick about it, for we are baggards! In order to relieve you from worrying about me, I have ordered the carriage, and I am going to move my trunks to the nearest hotel!"

"What! and desert me?" cried Mrs. Willis, panic-stricken and wounded in her only tender point—her love for her daughter. "Oh, Elinor, my own child, you cannot mean that you are going to leave me? You can't be so heartless!"

"I am what you have made me," replied her daughter, coldly, smoothing her dainty kids on her hands. "We needn't quarrel though, mother. I'll engage apartments for you while I am about it, for I suppose this house must be given up immediately."

She shook out her musk-scented lace handkerchief, glanced at her bonnet in the mirror, and then swept out of the room, leaving her mother half-paralyzed with astonishment and anger.

The carriage soon appeared; Elinor's trunks, to the number of half-a-dozen, were loaded upon, behind, and in front of it; she gave her address to her mother, and then drove away, serene in the consciousness that her purse was well-filled, and that she had five thousand pounds worth of jewellery in her possession, besides a quantity of new and costly dresses.

Elinor's words had been sufficient to fill Esther with most horrible sensations. Harry had written to her then! He was not yet married! He still loved her, and thought of her so continually that Elinor was clearly doubtful about securing his hand in marriage! These thoughts cut her like a knife.

Moreover, it appeared from Elinor's words that Pierre had really had a "plot," having succeeded in it!

The reflection was sufficient to horrify Esther, and she became fixed and rigid in the listening attitude she had chosen.

A moment more, and Jerry Stropes came downstairs, with his pockets stuffed out, and his person of unusually portly dimensions.

He had taken several potatoes to console him for the bad news of the morning, and his manner as he entered the presence of Mrs. Willis was anything but respectful. She instantly noticed his appearance, and said:

"What are you load-d with, Jerry?"

"Well, old woman!" he exclaimed, "I've bin a pickin' up of yer jewels and fripperies! I couldn't find yer purse, an' so clapped out yer valisees, laces, and such like!"

He clapped his hands to his well-stuffed pockets, and Mrs. Willis fairly raved in her wrathful excitement.

"You rascal!" she cried. "Give me my things this instant, or I'll call a policeman!"

"Not so fast, Dolly," he sneered. "I'm yer husband, and what's yours is mine! I've got this ler on my side, so be easy. You've got yer watch an' chain, an' brooches, and knick-knacks on, besides having yer purse in yer pocket."

Esther started, in surprise. Could her stepmother have married again, she thought? and could she have chosen such a bloated, drunken, wretch as Jerry Stropes after having been the wife of her noble and honoured father?

"I will not stand this, Jerry Stropes," cried his wife, forgetting her listeners in the adjoining room. "You dirty fellow—"

"Dirty fellow it is, then!" said Jerry. "Was it you dirty fellow when I married you twenty-one years ago, Dolly Stropes? Was you any better nor me? Want you trainin' for a pickpocket, or shop-lifter, and didn't I make yer a 'spectable creakman's wife? Sartin I did. An' jest because yer run away from me six years ago, an' married a soft-headed

feller in the country who was rich, I'm a dirty feller!"

Esther almost fainted with horror at this revelation. Mrs. Willis was too angry to reply: She could only shake her fist at Jerry.

"I've took keer of some of yer traps," resumed her husband, "but they'll be all yourn agin, if you'll do just as I say. You've got a good figure, an' a handsome face, besides a good share of smartness. We'd better jine hands agin, an' stick ter each other. We needn't never go ter no low crib agin ter live, but be 'spectable like."

The desperate woman listened with more attention than might have been expected. She felt that her project of securing the nabob was a mere contingency, and that she could not afford to discard even Jerry's humble services, until further developments.

"But Elinor's taken her things, and gone off to a hotel," she said, her heart inclining towards her daughter. "She wants me to come and stay there with her."

"Elinor be hanged!" ejaculated Stropes. "I hain't got much feelin' for her, thanks ter yer education her away from me. An' she hates me as she does pison. We couldn't gree together, nohow—so let her go, an' had ridance ter her! But, Dolly, you must stay with me. I'm thinkin' of openin' a neat little gambol-establimment."

"Everythin' shall be as you wish, Jerry," responded Mrs. Willis, anxious to keep on pleasant terms with him. "I am willing to help you as much as I can."

Esther shuddered at the thought of the woman who had been the respected mistress of her father's house being the proprietress of a gambling establishment. She placed her hand to her bosom, to assure herself of the safety of the will, which she had concealed on her person, and a feeling of gratitude filled her heart at possessing it, and at knowing that her father's hard-earned wealth would never be dissipated by the three persons into whose lives she had just had such strange glimpses.

The clergyman looked through the aperture at the handsome but coarse face of Mrs. Willis, and felt that he was receiving new light on the subject of depravity.

"Very well," said Jerry, in response to his wife's last remark. "We'll hitch houses agin, then. But remember, Dolly, I won't never hev no more kickin' in the traces, nor rumin' away. We're jined now for sartin."

He chuckled grimly, and went up-stairs, leaving his miserable wife to her own thoughts, and to the humiliation of knowing that much of her past life had been laid bare before the girl whom she had so bitterly hated and robbed. As damaging as these incidents had been to her, however, she was sustained by her proposed revenge upon Russell, and maintained her habitual coolness as she waited for his coming.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Two friends can in a little space repose,
But the whole world is narrow for two foes.

ANON.

NEARLY AN HOUR passed in waiting and watching. The secrets Esther had overheard respecting Harry, Jerry, &c., were sufficiently horrifying in themselves, but they sank into nothingness before the horrible anxieties she felt concerning the character and relations of her husband. She had already discovered enough to convulse her soul with terrible forebodings, and it required all of Mr. Sutton's persuasions to keep her quiet.

The door-bell finally rang, and Russell was ushered by a servant into his aunt's presence, with an expression of placid satisfaction on his face, and with a mien which in every way announced his consciousness of being master of the situation.

With a wild hope that the interview would vindicate her husband, Esther placed herself closer to the slight aperture which had been left between the sliding-doors.

"Oh, Pierre, is it you?" exclaimed his aunt, who had schooled herself into self-possession. "How glad I am to see you! This visit shows that you really mean to forgive us!"

She arose and advanced toward the visitor, extending her hand, which Russell accepted and pressed with apparent cordiality, at the same time returning her greetings in his blandest manner.

"Take a chair, Pierre," resumed Mrs. Willis, "and tell me where you have been the last month. I was afraid that you intended to desert us."

"No danger of that, with our affairs in such an unsettled condition," was the response, as Russell seated himself on a sofa opposite his aunt. "I have been waiting for a suitable tide of events—the fulfilment of certain projects. As you have always taken such a lively interest in me, my dear aunt, you will be en-

chanted to hear that I was married this morning to Miss Esther Willis!"

Mrs. Willis sank back in her chair, covering her face with her handkerchief, in a paroxysm of conflicting emotions.

"And I have not only married her," Russell resumed, in his blandest tones, "but I have placed in her hands the last will and testament of Mr. John Willis!"

"Then we are ruined!" groaned his aunt; "completely ruined!"

"Exactly!" rejoined her nephew, with a careless chuckle. "You have reached the exact position I swore to place you in the night I escaped from your cellar!"

"Your grievance is rather far-fetched," said Mrs. Willis. "You would have married Esther in any case, without waiting for provocation. If I had given you the fifty thousand pounds for stealing the last will out of Mr. Clayville's office, as I promised, you would not have given it up. No; you intended to keep it. You intended all the while to entrap Esther into marrying you, and then claim the whole property!"

"Well, I won't deny the fact," replied Russell. "I had loved Esther some time, even when her father was living!"

"And also loved her money," was the sneering comment.

"Well, the cash was taken into account, of course. My love was hopeless, for I knew that she loved Moreland, and was betrothed to him. Having obtained the last will, however—"

"Having stolen it from Mr. Clayville's desk, and substituted the former will for it!"

"Well, suit yourself about terms, my dear aunt. Having stolen the last will, if you like that expression better, and having foreseen what changes would follow Mr. Willis's death, I resolved to take the very course you have mentioned—marry the girl and inherit!"

"And, of course, you succeeded?"

"I succeeded, as I always do," and he twined his moustache with an air of satisfaction. "I kept my own counsel, followed Esther closely, watched her meeting with Moreland, attended them to a hotel, overheard all the arrangements they made about writing to each other, and saw them separate at the house where Esther was to officiate as governess."

"That was playing the spy to some advantage," commented Mrs. Willis, gratified beyond measure at her nephew's impudent frankness. "It appears that you received your reward?"

"Well, yes. I intercepted the letters of the loving couple by means of a clerk in Moreland's office, who secured Esther's on their arrival, and Harry's when he dispatched them to the post-office."

"And I suppose you have them yet?" exclaimed Mrs. Willis, in a whisper that was husky with her revengeful satisfaction.

"I daresay. When I perceived, from Harry's agonizing appeals, that he was in danger of calling at Esther's new residence, I went to her employer, suggested that her governess was a bad character, and so procured her dismissal. I hired a cabman to be near, and to report to me Esther's subsequent movements, as well as to take her trunks to my hotel, making it appear that he had stolen them. I had no difficulty in encountering her near her hotel, in such a way as to make the meeting seem accidental. Of course, I insisted on learning her troubles, finding her trunks, and procuring her a boarding-place; and at the same time took occasion to tell Esther a long string of falsehoods about Harry!"

"And she believed you, of course?" said his aunt, with a glance of triumphant malice at the folding doors.

"To be sure she believed me. My next step was to hunt up Harry, and tell him a similar series of falsehoods about Esther, declaring that she had left her situation as governess at the instigation of some unprincipled acquaintance."

Mrs. Willis uttered a cry of satisfaction that resembled the howl of a wild beast.

"Was there ever such a villain?" she exclaimed. "The same time you were lying to Esther about Harry, you were lying to Harry about Esther."

"Just so, although more delicate expressions might be used to describe my operations," said Pierre, quietly. "And that little meeting at the theatre, arranged by Elinor and me, put the finishing touch to the business."

"And all this while you were demanding money of me, on account of that fifty thousand; and all the while intending to separate Harry and Esther, and marry the girl yourself?"

"Granted. Why shouldn't I draw upon you for all the money I wanted, when all you had was to be mine in the end? Besides, you were all the while plotting to seize the last will and stop payments. You engaged your miserable husband and another

refused to assault me, and all of you afterwards attacked me and locked me up, after cutting and tearing my clothes off, with the threat of starving me to death. You need not affect such a pious horror at my separating the lovers, since you and Elinor were equally crazy to secure Moreland for your daughter. What reason you have, I have not quite fathomed; but I don't doubt you would have willingly killed Esther, if necessary, to keep her out of Moreland's way. The thing that troubles you, I have come out best. We have had a game of wits, and I have shown myself the smartest!"

"Perhaps not," replied Mrs. Willis, with blazing eyes. "You need not rejoice yet—you are not yet out of the woods. I can reveal your baseness to Esther, and show her that your whole conduct, since the death of her father, has been a conspiracy against her."

"You might accuse me," rejoined Russell, "if you could gain a sly interview with her—but that's all the good your accusations would do you. She would not believe a word you might say against me. I am no blunderer, my dear aunt, nor do I do my work by halves. Esther thinks me as much a model of virtue and nobleness, as she thinks Moreland false. She has implicit faith in me, and you could never move it. Besides, she knows you too well to trust you."

Mrs. Willis smiled—a bitter and triumphant smile. "You can sneer," Russell continued; "but I know the truth of my assertion. My whole conduct has been such a consummate piece of acting that an angel from heaven could not make Esther doubt me! I have devoted all my energies to it, and have succeeded in playing the saint to perfection!"

Mrs. Willis was speechless with the revengeful joy these declarations gave her.

"And I have told you all this," Russell proceeded, "in order to add to the gall and wormwood my success has caused you. The more clearly you understand my operations, the greater will be your impotent rage at the change in our fortunes. Smart and keen as you have thought yourself, Mrs. Strope, you see that you have found more than your match!"

"Fool! dupe! you are mistaken!" screamed Mrs. Willis, arising, in a transport of furious delight at the thorough manner in which Russell had exposed himself. "Your baseness is unmasked, and your infernal deceptions ended!"

As Russell was not in the secret of this outburst, it appeared to him so much sound and fury, and he quietly responded:

"If you adopt this ridiculous strain, Mrs. Strope, you will regret it. As vindictive as you have shown yourself, particularly in the matter of locking me up in the cellar, I am not disposed to be merciful to you. You have your jewellery and your ready money, to say nothing of the good style of living you have enjoyed at Esther's expense. Behave yourself, and I shall not distress you on any of these accounts; but if you attempt to make me any trouble, I will show you no mercy!"

"I want none of your mercy!" was the angry response. "It was you that conceived the design of suppressing Mr. Willis's last will; it was you that substituted the first will for it; it was you who led me on, step by step, in the conspiracy against Esther! It will not be my fault if she does not know you as you are—a selfish and mercenary wretch—a gentle burglar—an unprincipled thief—"

"And who and what are you?" retorted Russell, with a touch of rising wrath on his face. "Who and what is your beloved husband, the esteemed Jerry, the half of whose days have been passed in prison? Who and what is your daughter, who has been fairly forcing herself upon Moreland during these weeks of his agony, and has not yet caught him? Permit me to suggest that any accusations coming from such a source will not be credited by those best acquainted with your family!"

"Villain, you will answer—"

"Villain to yourself!" interrupted Russell, arising. "If you ever mention my wife's name again, I'll have you arrested for the murder of Mr. Willis! I know that you put your knees on his chest the night of his death, thus hastening his end—"

Beside herself with anger, Mrs. Willis caught up a chair, and aimed a savage blow at the head of her nephew.

A wall of more than mortal anguish came from behind the folding-doors, but it was unheard by either Mrs. Willis or her nephew, owing to the crash of the chair on the floor, Russell having sprang aside.

"Another movement like that, you old Hecate," he cried, producing a pistol, "and I will shoot you!"

Mrs. Willis gave utterance to a scornful and triumphant laugh, glaring at her nephew. Her frenzied vehemence, and the awful light blazing in her eyes under her triumphant vindictiveness, fairly appalled him, and a sense of some horrible mistake, or of some unforeseen calamity, swept over his soul,

choking his utterance, rooting him to the floor, and blanching his features to an ashen hue.

"A fine husband, truly, flourishing pistols on his bridal morning!" she screamed. "Behold, you low-born whelp, how I have achieved my triumph! Behold who is master! Behold who has listened to every word you have uttered—who has heard from your own lips the story of your infamy and baseness!"

Bounding forward with the quickness of an enraged beast of prey, she threw wide open the folding doors.

(To be continued.)

PHILOSOPHY IN A CUP OF TEA.

We were recently interested and somewhat amused at the conversation of two gentlemen at a table before us in a restaurant. As their cups of tea were placed on the table, one of them remarked to the other:

"I suppose, doctor, you put the milk and sugar into your tea on philosophical principles?"

"Certainly," said the doctor. "I have ascertained, not by syllogistic reasoning, but by direct observation, that of that particular property, that tea is spoiled if it gets cold, or even cool, and I consequently introduce the milk and sugar in a way to cool it as little as possible. Now, a cup of tea loses its heat in two ways, by evaporation and by radiation. It is well known that all bodies radiate heat, and that at a high temperature they radiate more heat than at a low temperature. Heat is streaming out from this cup of tea in every direction, and is absorbed by the walls of the room, at the same time heat is being emitted from the walls of the room, and is being absorbed by the cup of tea. But as the tea radiates more heat than it receives, it is constantly growing cooler. When its temperature has come down to that of the surrounding walls, it will cease to grow colder."

"The law on which I act is this: the rapidity of the cooling is proportioned to the difference between the temperature of the tea and that of the bodies by which it is surrounded; that is to say, when it is very hot, it loses heat more rapidly by radiation than after its temperature has been reduced. The same is the case with the cooling by evaporation. The steam that you see rising here, though no hotter than the water, has in fact absorbed 1,000 degrees of heat, and that has come from the tea. This evaporation goes on most rapidly when the tea is hottest. Thus in both ways a hot cup of tea loses heat more rapidly than a cooler cup. If when it is boiling hot its temperature is reduced at the rate of a degree a minute, perhaps when it gets within two or three degrees of the temperature of surrounding objects, it may not be cooled at the rate of a degree in half an hour."

"If the milk and sugar are introduced when the tea is first brought, their cooling effect is applied to the cup in its hottest condition, and the reduction of temperature is checked; while if the rapid cooling is allowed to go on awhile first, and then the temperature is further reduced by the addition of the cold milk and sugar, the tea is made very cold, and its flavour is ruined. So, you see, when I put the milk and sugar into my tea as soon as it is brought, I do it on philosophical principles."

THE TRIUMPH.

MARGARET of Anjou, the intrepid and high-spirited queen of the gentle-hearted but weak-minded Henry VI., heard with indignation the harsh decree that disinherited her infant son. It mattered little to her that the title and dignity of king were accorded during his lifetime to the husband she neither loved nor respected; a monarch so weak as to allow the sceptre to be wrested from his hand, with scarcely an effort to retain it, could hold no empire over a high, proud heart like hers. The softest feeling she had ever experienced for him was pity and contempt; and this was well-nigh merged into hatred when she heard how meekly he acquiesced in the decree that robbed their son of his birthright.

She loved this child with all the intensity of her fierce and ardent nature; and when she found that his claims to the succession were to be set aside in favour of Richard, Duke of York, the high spirit of her race rose up in defiance, and she vowed that she would shed the last drop of blood in her veins sooner than submit to such an indignity.

Knowing from experience how little aid she could expect from Henry, she fled to the north immediately after the disastrous battle of Northampton, taking the young prince with her. She placed her son fearlessly in the hands of the northern barons, calling upon them to rally in defence of the rights of which he had been defrauded.

The sight of their young and beautiful queen flying to their protection, aroused the chivalrous sentiment that was a strong element in the character

of a race as generous as it was brave; they responded with alacrity, and summoning their retainers, to the number of twenty thousand, pledged their lives and fortunes to her service. Among these was Sir John Gray, whose valour and zeal in her service early awakened the queen's admiration and gratitude, who bestowed upon him many marks of confidence and regard. There were rumours that she cherished for him an even more tender feeling, but this might have been the result of envy in those who saw themselves distanced in her favour.

Some three or four years previously, Sir John had married the beautiful and high-born Lady Elizabeth Woodville, daughter of the Duchess of Bedford by her second husband, Sir Richard Woodville. This lady, in spite of her beauty and amiability, never seemed to have received the tenderness and affection she merited from her husband, whose whole soul was wrapped up in his ambitious projects.

Whether Sir John entertained for the queen any warmer sentiment than that of loyalty, certain it is that her favour and fair promises aroused the ambition that was his ruling passion, and he threw himself, heart and soul, into her cause. He made no half venture, for well he knew, that while success would place him on the high road to fortune, defeat would cost him his life and deprive his children of their inheritance.

In the meantime, the Duke of York was inwardly congratulating himself on the easy attainment of his ambitious hopes. Parliament, it is true, had denied him the title of king, but had created him Protector during Henry's life, and had ordained that at his death the crown should descend to him and to his heirs; and he anticipated little difficulty in carrying out this enactment.

But the news of Queen Margaret's resistance to his claims was not long in reaching him, yet he was far from realizing its formidable nature. Taking with him five thousand troops, he started out to suppress what he rashly supposed to be the beginning of an insurrection. He had reached Wakefield before he discovered that the enemy were three to one.

The Earl of Salisbury urged him to retreat to a castle near by, and wait for reinforcements; but the warlike duke, brave even to rashness, felt that he would be covered with lasting shame should he flee before a woman.

Placing himself at the head of his troops, he attacked Queen Margaret's forces, who were stationed near by; a temerity that cost him his life and the majority of his brave followers, three thousand of whom were killed, and the rest taken prisoners.

Throughout the whole of this engagement Sir John Gray was seen in the thickest of the fray. He killed the Duke of York with his own hands, and when the battle was over, carried the body in triumph to the queen.

Queen Margaret, in whose heart ambition and revenge had extinguished every spark of womanly tenderness, looked down exultantly upon the foe, whose stalwart arm and scheming brain could work no further ill to her or hers. She ordered the head to be severed from the trunk, a paper crown to be fixed upon the brow, in derision of his claims, and then placed upon the gates of York. Elated at her commendations, Sir John Gray assisted in executing this command.

This indignity, offered to a fallen foe, cost the haughty queen dear, as well as all who had any hand in it. Emboldened by this success, Queen Margaret pressed eagerly forward. In order to strike terror to her foes, she put to death every prisoner of note that fell into her hands. Among these were the Earls of Rutland and Salisbury; the former a son of the late Duke of York, only seventeen, and whose youth and amiability pleaded in vain for mercy.

But her triumph was short. Edward, eldest son of Duke Richard, inherited the talents and courage of his ill-fated father, without the rashness that led to his untimely death. Strongly attached to his father, when he heard of his fate and the insult offered to his remains, he was filled with grief and indignation, and he swore a terrible oath that none of those concerned in it should escape life's vengeance. And well did he keep it.

His energetic and successful demonstrations obliged Margaret to retreat to the North, and he entered London amid the joyous acclamations of the people. Avoiding his father's error, he boldly assumed the title of king, under the name of Edward IV. His remarkable personal attractions, bravery, and the gracious affability of his bearing, won the hearts of the people, and they eagerly ratified his claims.

Three years have passed since Edward's coronation, each one fixing the crown more firmly upon his brow. Henry of Lancaster is a prisoner in his hands, Margaret and her son in exile, while nearly all who adhered to their fortunes have paid for their fidelity with their lives.

At peace at home and abroad, the young king laid aside the martial exercises and weighty cares that had hitherto engrossed his mind, and entered eagerly into the pleasures to which his youth and ardent temperament predisposed him.

Hard and cruel as Edward could be when the worst part of his nature was aroused, he was peculiarly susceptible to the tender passions. Handsome, in the full bloom of youth and manly vigour, and a king, it may be conjectured that he did not seek vainly the smiles of beauty. But what is easily won is lightly prized, and none of the bright eyes and graceful forms that flitted across his path, eager to win an admiring glance or a merry jest from the gallant monarch, had power to call forth any higher and holier feeling than the passing fancy of the moment.

Edward had punished with relentless severity all who were even remotely concerned in the death of his father; but he by whose hand he fell, and who heaped indignity on his lifeless body, had escaped his vengeance. Sir John Gray fell at the second battle of St. Albans. As soon as Edward came into power, however, he confiscated his property, which obliged Lady Elizabeth, then in the fresh bloom and beauty of womanhood, to retire, with her penniless children, to her father's estate at Grafton, who cheerfully gave them a home, though his narrow income, straitened by the exigencies of the times, could ill bear this additional burthen.

The young widow could scarcely be expected to mourn very deeply for a husband who had manifested so little affection for her; but a devoted mother, she felt keenly the blow that consigned her children to helpless beggary, and gave them, instead of their rightful inheritance, the legacy of shame and obscurity.

High-spirited and energetic, Lady Elizabeth was not one to submit tamely to this, yet though she had many relatives of high rank and influence, not one of them dared to hint to the king of mercy toward his father's murderer; for it was well known that the unfortunate duke, wounded and hard beset, delivered up his sword in the vain hope of mercy, which his remorseless captor took and thrust through his heart.

In a spacious apartment at Grafton Hall, to which its heavy oak furniture, black and polished with age, gave a sombre but not unpleasant aspect, sat the Duchess of Bedford and her widowed daughter, Lady Elizabeth Gray.

Though passed the meridian of life, the former still retained much of the beauty that distinguished her in her youth. Left early a widow, Jacqueline Luxembourg, disregarding the voice of ambition, chose from among her many suitors a private gentleman by the name of Woodville; a marriage that resulted in much happiness and a numerous progeny. Among these there was one destined to raise her father's family to a lofty and perilous height.

Lady Elizabeth inherited, with her mother's beauty, her father's loftiness and pride of character. The sorrows and mortifications through which she has passed, have taken from her cheeks something of their native bloom, but have added a pensive beauty to her countenance that more than compensates for its loss. A sweet, blue-eyed boy is leaning against her knee, on whom she is gazing with maternal fondness, and another is playing about the room.

Suddenly there came the sounds of the baying of hounds, followed by the huntsman's halloo.

The Duchess of Bedford turned to the window that commanded a full view of the surrounding country. As she did so, a party of horsemen emerged from the open forest, and struck into the broad road that led to the castle.

"The king!" she ejaculated, as her eye fell upon one of them, who rode a little in advance of the rest.

Lady Elizabeth started to her feet, and looked eagerly out. She had never seen King Edward, yet she needed not that any one should point him out to her, for he looked the thing he was. He sat upon his coal-black steed as though it was his throne, while with the air of royal dignity that he wore so gracefully was mingled the gracious and winning courtesy which made him, in spite of his many serious faults of character, the idol of his people.

As Lady Elizabeth looked upon the unrelenting enemy of her house, who had consigned herself and children to beggary, a crowd of conflicting feelings arose in her heart. The compressed lip and flashing eye softened into an involuntary look of admiration and interest.

"Mother," she said impulsively, as the king and his cortege passed under the gateway out of sight, "King Edward looks not the hard and cruel tyrant I had thought him. Who knows but what God has sent him across my path, that I may obtain some mercy for my helpless children?"

The duchess shook her head sorrowfully.

"It would be useless, my child. The king has shown himself bitter and unrelenting in his enmity, and the children of Sir John Gray are the last to whom he would show any mercy."

"I will make the attempt at least; I can but fail, at the worst. If his looks belie him not, the sight of a widowed mother pleading for her fatherless children will move his heart to compassion."

The duchess turned a look of mingled surprise and apprehension upon her daughter, whose countenance was flushed and irradiated by the lofty purpose that filled her heart. Never before had she realized her exceeding beauty.

"Daughter," she said, after a moment's thought, "if report speaks truly, King Edward is not one to refuse aught to beauty such as thine. But beware lest he ask thee in return what thou canst not give. Thy children's inheritance would be dearly purchased by their mother's dishonour!"

Lady Elizabeth's beautiful eyes looked the scorn that she did not speak.

"My mother has little confidence in her daughter's integrity," she said calmly. "Let me but have audience with the king, and I will soon prove to her how groundless are her fears!"

Before the duchess could reply, an attendant entered with a message from Sir Richard, notifying her of the king's arrival; and leaving the room, she descended to receive the royal guest.

"Am I, then, so very beautiful?" murmured Lady Elizabeth, as soon as she was left alone. Rising from her seat, she crossed the room, and stood before a mirror of burnished steel. Many bright eyes had looked into it, but never had it flashed back a more regal form, or a fairer and sweeter face. Yet the fleeting smile of triumph that gleamed in those dark eyes was followed by a look of doubt and fear, as though her mother's warning sounded in her ears. Turning, she looked upon her children.

"I will risk it for their sake!" she murmured, as she clasped them in her arms.

Half-an-hour later, the duchess hastily re-entered, saying:

"Daughter, the king is in the east room, alone with thy father; this is the most favourable opportunity, if thou still desirest to speak with him."

By previous understanding, Sir Richard left by another door, as his daughter, leading by the hand her two children, made her appearance. King Edward was too much startled by the lovely vision before him to feel more than a momentary surprise at this abrupt departure.

Obedying the impulse of her feelings, Lady Elizabeth threw herself at the king's feet, and bathed them with her tears. Moved by the beauty and unfeigned distress of the fair suppliant, Edward sought to assure her, by kind, encouraging words, of his favour and protection.

"What is thy name, lady, and what boon dost thou seek at our hands?" he inquired.

"Most gracious liege, I will not speak a name thou hast too much reason to detest, lest I haply give offence. I will only say that you see before you a widowed mother, pleading for her fatherless and impoverished children."

There instantly flashed upon the king's mind the name of the petitioner, and the nature of the boon she craved, and between him and that lovely face, glided the pale, lifeless form of the father he had so loved and mourned. His averted eyes and constrained voice showed plainly the change in his feelings.

"Thou must needs have great boldness," he said, coldly, "to venture to plead their cause, not being ignorant who it was who made me fatherless."

"Nay, sire, say rather that I must have great confidence in the justice of my king, to feel so sure that he will not let the innocent children suffer for the father's guilt."

Again Edward looked down into the eloquent eyes that were raised so beseechingly to his; and as he did so, every resentful feeling was overwhelmed by the uprising of that mighty passion that from that time until the day of his death never lost its sway over his heart.

"Rise, I beseech thee, sweet lady!" he cried; "thou hast conquered. I will not give thee cause to regret the confidence thou hast placed in Edward's clemency. Ah, if I could only hope that the suit that my heart constrains me to urge, would find as much favour in thy sight!"

Lady Elizabeth withdrew the hand that the king raised to his lips, with an air of matronly dignity that invested her with a new charm; yet she accompanied this tacit rebuke with a grateful glance and smile that made him scarcely deem it a repulse.

King Edward dismissed his attendants, and day after day found him a willing captive at Lady Elizabeth's side. Her modesty, wit, and intelligence completed what her beauty began. Never before had the king felt the force of a sincere and earnest passion, and the difficulties that lay in the way of its gratification only added to its vehemence. But vain were all his efforts to wake a response in the heart of his object. Lady Elizabeth was not insensible to the manly graces of the youthful monarch, but the manner

with which she received his addresses showed plainly her determination to accept from him none save honourable overtures, and these he felt he was not at liberty to make.

Before the king met Lady Elizabeth, he had made applications for the hand of Princess Bona of Savoy, sister to the Queen of France, the Earl of Warwick being sent to Paris for that purpose. His proposal had been accepted, and nothing remained to complete this treaty but the bringing of the princess to England. As strongly interested as Edward's affections now were elsewhere, he felt that it would be hazardous to retreat; and, besides, he had not relinquished all hope of being able to gratify both his love and ambition.

"Dear Elizabeth," he pleaded, "very gladly would I give thee my hand, were it not pledged to another. I lay my heart at thy feet, together with all the honours that a king can bestow!"

True to the noble instincts of her nature, Lady Elizabeth turned steadily away from this dazzling offer.

"It is useless to urge me," she said; "I may not rise so high as to be the wife of my king; I will not stoop so low as to be his mistress. The highest honour in your majesty's gift could not compensate me for the loss of mine!"

This lofty reply raised to the highest pitch the king's love and admiration.

"Royal by nature, if not by birth!" he cried; "again hast thou conquered! None other shall share my throne: I swear it by my crown and sceptre!"

King Edward kept his word.

A private marriage at Grafton was followed, a few months after, by its public acknowledgment; and she who returned to her father's house penniless left it to mount a throne.

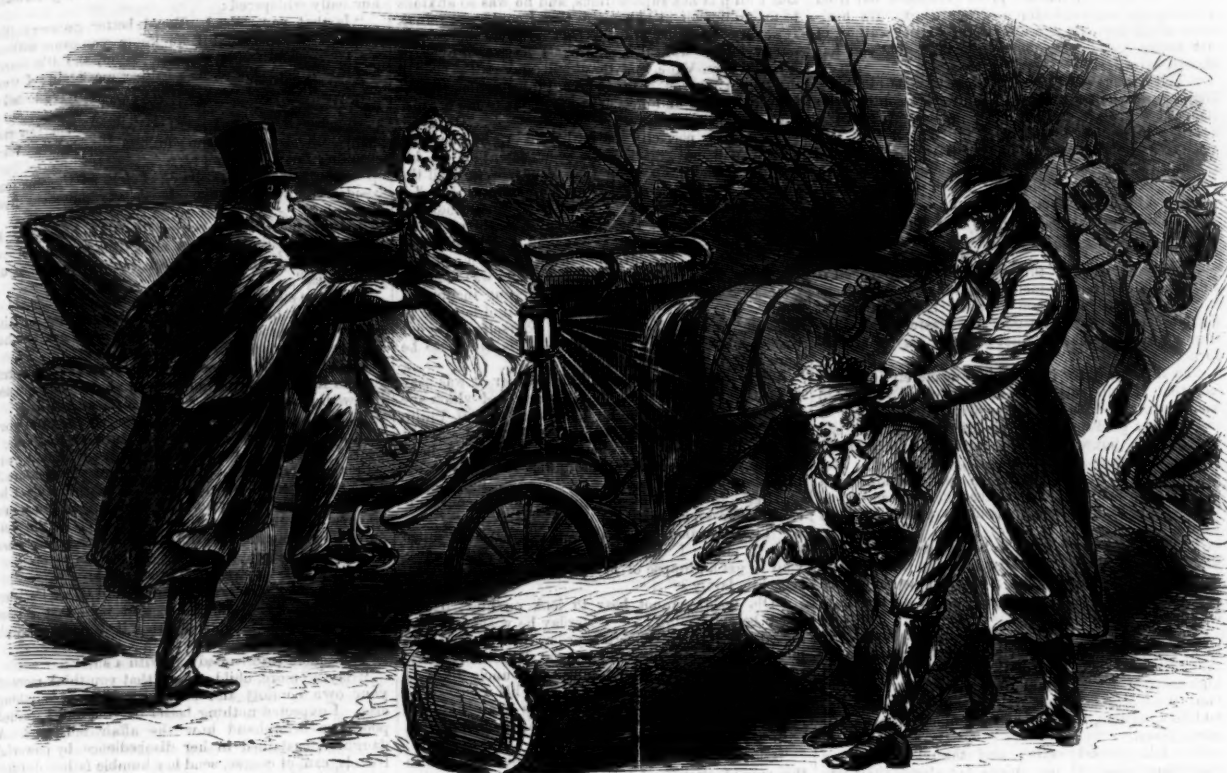
Had the idea been suggested to the king, a year before, that he would have taken to his heart the widow of the man whom his hate had pursued beyond the grave, and cherished his children as his own, how indignantly it would have been rejected! Yet this is but one amongst the countless triumphs of love and beauty!

M. G. E.

THE Sheffield disaster probed the sympathy of the public and found it not wanting; indeed, it inundated the inundated, and there is absolutely a balance of £3,200 too much in hand, which is to be returned with thanks.

SALE OF POISONS BILL.—The important government department which Mr. Simon directs with admirable discretion and skill, and which, perhaps more than any other department, is quietly laying the basis of reforms most essential to the welfare of the people, has directed that investigation into the deaths by poisoning arising from free trade in the sale of poisons which the public have long asked. Dr. Taylor has collected ample information. Further researches have only disclosed more proof of the mischief accruing from the unrestricted sale of poisons by uneducated persons; from the absence of precautions in handling and retailing them; from the extreme latitude with which the law interprets the phrase, "culpable negligence;" and from the impunity with which acts of utter inattention and carelessness, causing death, have passed unpunished. In the recent case of Lingard v. Clay and Abraham, heavy damages were recovered from that firm; but the assistant, whose carelessness was the cause of death, escaped all punishment. There is reason to hope that some well-devised form of Sale of Poisons Bill will now be arranged, which would meet with general support.

A CURIOUS case is reported as having occurred at Yvetot. A small farmer had amassed a sum of money, and hoarded it, as most of his class do in France; and he had a trustworthy female servant, the sole inhabitant with him of his house. At last for a length of time the man became convinced that his store of cash had been discovered, and that he was daily robbed of a small sum. As there was no one else had access to the money, after mentioning it frequently, and matters still going on the same, he dismissed the woman from his service, in spite of her tears and supplications. A few nights after he broke a glass on the dining-table, and all the pieces were not swept cleanly off by his new servant. The next day, after a short walk, his feet pained him, and he found they were bleeding from small particles of glass sticking into them. With a better head than his rank have generally for putting cause and effect together, he mounted the table where the glass had been broken, and on looking about discovered a hole above a beam, and on placing his hands in it found all the cash he had missed—a clear case of circumstantial evidence against himself, that he had been robbing himself while a somnambulist. Generously to make amends to the servant, and to have a check at night over his doings, he offered her his hand and his part, &c., and they have been married.



[ISOLA CARRIED OFF BY ROSELLI.]

THE FATAL SECRET.

CHAPTER XXXV.

’Tis strange the villain should such snares employ
To gain those riches he can ne’er enjoy.

Pope.

He walked the floor, seemingly in meditation, till Miss Carleton again joined them. She came in smiling, and walking straight to Isola, took her in her arms, and said:

“Now you belong to me. Your father has listened to my representations, and—and he has relinquished his rights to me.”

Isola could scarcely believe this grateful assurance. She still trembled and doubted; but Roselli, who followed Miss Carleton, approached her, and took her hand respectfully in his own:

“My angel child, I have consented to peril my soul’s salvation that your earthly happiness may be secured. With the dross of earth, your friend has purchased the right to take my place. I will go, my child, since I see that my presence does not bring you happiness. I will seek you no more. I leave with you the picture of your sainted mother; it would henceforth break my heart to look upon it, and feel that I have been untrue to the vow we both made over your infant couch.”

Isola held out her hand to receive the miniature; and after glancing at it, pressed it to her lips.

“I have no words to thank you for the concession you have made. This image shall be tenderly cherished, and for you I will seek to cultivate that feeling of affection which is due to you as my father.”

“I must endeavour to satisfy myself with that,” he replied, with mournful emphasis. “Adieu, my angel! Come, Somerton; my heart is broken, and I must seek solitude to regain composure.”

He pressed the hand of Isola to his lips, and although she made an effort to arise and offer him her cheek to kiss, she felt that it was impossible to bring herself to do so; and Miss Carleton pressed her arm around her and held her firmly to herself, as if unwilling that she should do so. She whispered in her ear:

“Be still, Isola; this man is not your father. I care nothing for his proofs. If he really possessed parental authority over you, he would not so readily have yielded it.”

With an air of profound affliction, Roselli left the room, leaning on the arm of Somerton, and accompanied by the general. When the door was closed, Isola faintly asked:

“Oh, cousin Carrie! how did you save me from him?”

“By the offer of money, my love. In exchange for an order on my bankers for fifteen hundred pounds, he gave me a paper in which he relinquishes all right to you. There—look up, Isola; you belong now only to me, and my first care shall be to secure your happiness and that of my dear George. I have long designed the larger part of my fortune for him, for I shall never marry; and I can make no better use of a portion of it than to save his darling for him. Is it not so?” And the kind eyes that looked into hers were beaming with the most tender affection.

“I thank you with all my heart; but, oh! if I am indeed the child of that man, what a dreadful humiliation it is to me to think that he would take money from those who have been friends to me when I most needed help.”

“Isola,” said Miss Carleton, in a voice of conviction, “I again repeat to you that Senor Roselli is not your father. I gave him money as the easiest means of ridding you of his persecutions, but I have no faith in his pretensions.”

“But this miniature—I am surely like it.”

“The original of this picture may have been your mother, for you certainly resemble it; but that she was ever his wife I very strongly doubt. I think he can tell to whom you really belong, if he could be induced to do so; but that you are his child, I will never believe. Come to my room, and compose yourself. The agitation of this scene has made you almost ill. You must write to George, and tell him all that has happened here.”

“Yes—and tell him what a deliverer you have been to me in my hour of need.”

Her friend kissed her, and together they went to Miss Carleton’s apartment.

In the meantime Somerton and his companion had driven away. They were no sooner on the public road than the former asked:

“How much did you make out of her?”

“Only fifteen hundred; but I believe if I had held out a little longer I could have extorted more.”

“That seems quite enough for a sham claim, in all conscience,” said Somerton, drily. “I hardly thought she would come up to such a figure as that. What did you give her in return?”

“A relinquishment of all power over the girl. She would accept nothing less.”

“If you intended to remain in this country, that might be troublesome; but as you will embark at once for Italy, when you have secured her, it’s not of

much consequence. I knew they would not give her up from the first, but I thought we would see what they would do about it. I have enabled you to make this haul, and half the spoils are justly mine. The sum agreed on between you and Bianca has nothing to do with this.”

Roselli at first demurred to this arrangement; but Somerton was firm, and used such arguments with his colleague as finally convinced him that it was necessary to share his booty with him.

It was settled between them that they should go to the bank the following morning, and draw the money; and on his return to Fountains, Somerton would cause it to be made known at the Vale that Roselli had departed, never more to return.

Isola was in the habit of coming over to her old home on every bright day, to inquire after Mr. Fontaine, and, if possible, obtain a glimpse of him from the library.

On these occasions she never met Philip, and only spent a few moments with Savella before returning.

It was arranged between the confederates that on her return from Fountains the carriage was to be stopped, and the helpless girl conveyed by force to the nearest railway station.

In a few hours she would be safe in a seaport town, where Roselli could easily find a vessel bound to some foreign country.

Once out of England, he felt confident that he could answer for the safe-keeping of the hapless girl toward whom he had undertaken to play the part of a parent.

While Isola penned her letter to George Berkeley, telling him of the strange events of the last few weeks, these two miscreants matured their plans, and took every precaution to prevent them from being circumvented.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The gods, in bounty, work up storms about us,
That give the oppressed occasion to exert
Their hidden strength, and throw out into practice
Virtues which were unused, and lay concealed
In the smooth seasons and the calms of life.

Addison.

On the third morning after the visit of Roselli, Miss Carleton received the following note from the senora:

“MISS CARLETON.—Dear Madam: My poor friend Leo has left Fountains, never more to return. With a heart filled with gratitude to you for all your kindness to his daughter, he begged me to express what his own emotions would not permit him to do. He is

sorely wounded by the indifference Isola manifested toward him, and thinks her pride prevented her from showing the natural feelings of her heart. He hesitates to call her cold and ungrateful to the author of her being; yet he cannot help feeling that she has shown herself so.

"Tell her she need no longer fear to meet him here. She can come as usual to inquire after him who usurped the place in her affections which rightfully belongs to her own father. I pitied poor Leo, and tried to console him for this bitter disappointment, for he hoped to meet a rich return for the love he so long cherished for his lost child; but he left me in a state bordering on distraction, and I do not know what may yet be the result of his despair. In the hope that he will attempt nothing dreadful, I am, yours, respectfully,"

"Bianca Roselli."

Miss Carleton read this note, and quietly placed it in her portfolio, as she mentally said:

"I fancy he will soon recover his equanimity. Such a man as that is not going to waste much feeling on anything that does not concern his own comfort."

She did not show it to Isola, but merely informed her that Roselli was gone, and she could venture to visit Fountains without danger of meeting him.

Isola was glad to receive this assurance, for she had just left the house since she became aware that her pretended father was in the neighbourhood. Her affectionate heart yearned to be near Fontaine for a season, even if she was aware that her presence was unknown to him, and could be of no possible benefit to him.

The carriage was ordered to be in readiness immediately after dinner, and Miss Carleton declared her intention to accompany her; but just as they were preparing to set out, some friends called at the Vale and detained her.

Unconscious of the snare prepared for her, Isola took her place in the vehicle, and was whirled over the glittering road as rapidly as two powerful and high-mettled horses could carry her. The only servant who attended her was the driver, a steady, middle-aged man, who had held the office of coachman many years.

She felt perfectly safe; and the clear, bracing atmosphere elevated her spirits far above their late level.

When she reached Fountains, she was looking almost like her former self; and Savella, who met her in the hall, exclaimed:

"You are positively brilliant to-day, Isola. The winter air has brought back all the roses to your cheeks. I only wish it would have that effect on mine, for Philip thinks nothing so beautiful as a fresh colour. By the way, have you seen Philip since our marriage?"

"No. When I have been here he was always absent, and Mr. Vane has ceased his visits at the Vale."

"And for a very good reason," replied Savella, with a toss of her head. "The Berkeley family have treated us with incivility since our marriage. They did not notice our wedding cards in any way; but, for my part, I do not care, though Philip seems to take it to heart. He has become so moody and changed from his old merry self since we came here, that sometimes I am half-tempted to be jealous."

"Jealous! of whom, pray?" asked Isola, with an expression of surprise.

"How innocent you look! Of you, to be sure; who else should I be jealous of? But if I thought Philip cared the least little bit about you, I should be tempted to do something terrible."

And she burst into a hysterical laugh.

By this time they had gained the sitting-room, and, shutting the door, Isola gravely said:

"My dear Savella, it is not well to play with edged tools. Philip cares no more for me than I do for him. If we once cherished a childish liking for each other, believe me that it is dead and buried long ago. If his spirits have failed, you may be sure it is from some cause quite disconnected with his past fancies. I ask, as a favour, you will never again speak to me in this way."

"How very dignified you have become since you have been adopted by Miss Carleton! I suppose you intend to imitate her grand manners; but they won't set well on you, child. You are too young to attempt her style with success. Heigho! I am in an ill humour to-day, for Philip would go to town with Mr. Somerton, though I am certain he had no business there. They don't intend to come back till to-morrow night; and just think how ill-used I am. I have only been married three weeks, and here I am left, in this old haunted house, with no one to speak to but my aunt."

"Have the noises still continued? I thought the voices said they were to cease after I left."

"So they have; but once heard, you know, one is always in dread of their return. I wonder how I

could ever have consented to come back here at all. But Philip is not superstitious, and he was so anxious to make himself at home here that I could not refuse. It's very strange; but he isn't half as merry and happy as he was at Denclere. I have sent over for Mr. and Mrs. Vane, and they will stay with me till my truant returns. Oh! I love Philip so dearly that even his father and mother are precious to me because they are his."

"That is perfectly natural and right, Savella. Philip will be gratified by your attention to his parents. Oh! I do hope that you will find all the happiness you anticipated in your union with him."

"Of course I shall. I hope you don't doubt it because I spoke in that silly manner when we first met. Philip is devoted to me, and I adore him; so you see we have the surest foundation for happiness. Oh, dear! I feel as if something terrible was looming over me; but you have got rid of your incubus, I hear. Your father is gone for good, and left you in the snug nest you have found for yourself. Is your case the old proverb is verified—'Tis better to be born lucky than rich.'"

While Savella ran on in this manner, it was easy to see that a weight pressed on her mind, of which she was anxious to rid herself. Isola wondered if Philip had already betrayed to her that motive of interest led him to seek her hand; but she could not believe that he was reckless enough to inflict this blow in the first month of their union.

After a few more moments of desultory conversation, she arose, and said:

"The afternoons are so short that I have not much time to stay. I will go into the library, and endeavour to get a glimpse of my poor father. Have you seen him lately?"

"Oh, no! I cannot bear to look on him; but he must be improving, for yesterday he wished to hear me play. By Dr. Sinclair's order, the piano was removed into the library, and I spent two hours there, playing the wild German music my uncle likes so much; but he did not come out of his room. The doctor told me that he lay back in his chair like one in a trance, and when he was tired, he made a motion with his hand to have me stop."

"Oh, how I wish that I could minister to him in this way!" exclaimed Isola. "I would be willing to devote my life to his service."

"Well, I must say that I found it very tiresome to play in a darkened room, with no one to listen but a stupid old doctor and a half-sleeping man," replied Savella, indifferently. "It's a pity you can't transfer to your own father a portion of the devotion you feel for Mr. Fontaine. He seemed in a terrible state when he came back from the Vale, and told us he had given you up, because he saw how reluctant you were to leave your friends there."

Isola changed colour, and uneasily asked:

"Did he seem really afflicted, Savella? He talked so strangely that I thought he was not more anxious to take me with him than I was to go."

"There you wrong Senator Roselli, my dear. He speaks extravagantly, because he has lived among actors till he has caught their manners; but I think he was sincere in his anguish when he found that the hope of his life was finally broken. It cost him great suffering to give you up, Isola."

Savella really believed this; for on his return to Fountains, Roselli had acted a most tragic scene in the presence of herself and her aunt, with the certainty that Savella would describe it to Isola, and thus prepare the way for the subsequent acts of the drama.

She stood a few moments without speaking; but Savella saw, from the changes in her companion's face, that her heart was deeply touched. At length she said:

"I hope that it would not make him very miserable to leave me. He has never had me with him, and I cannot therefore be necessary to his happiness."

"My dear, your father seems to be a romantic man; and, peculiar as his manners are, I think he has very ardent feelings. He seemed quite crushed when he took leave of us. He said he should return at once to Italy, as he could not remain in the same country with you without seeking your presence."

With a feeling of self-condemnation, Isola took leave of Savella, and slowly approached the apartment of Fontaine.

She cautiously unclosed the library window; and sitting past Giles, who was fast asleep, she cautiously drew aside the folds of the curtain, and looked into the larger room.

Fontaine was reading, and the evening light fell through the window upon his face. Isola thought it looked calmer than usual, but there was an air of lassitude and extreme dejection that alarmed her for his health.

Her gaze seemed to disturb him, for he glanced uneasily toward the curtain, and commenced muttering something she could not understand.

Giles was aroused at once, and, starting forward, hurriedly whispered:

"Is that you, miss? You'd better go away; the doctor would be vexed if he knew you came without his permission. Master is no better, and it's feared never will be. There, he's calling me again; I must go in. Please go away, that I may not have to tell a lie."

In spite of this entreaty, Isola lingered a few moments, till she heard the sound of that beloved voice speaking to the old man:

"Who was that, Giles? I felt as if some one besides you was near me. Is—is any one here from the Vale?"

"If you mean Miss Carrie, she ain't here, sir. If you heard anything, it was me talking in my sleep; for it's so dull in them that I can't help doing sometimes."

Fontaine sighed heavily, and, after a pause, said:

"She will hardly come again. Notice the curtain, Giles; I wish to go into the library and get another volume; I have finished this."

Isola hurried away, and, as she did so, encountered Senator Roselli, wrapped in a heavy shawl. She greeted her with more friendliness than usual, and said:

"I must congratulate you on the settlement of your affairs. You are to become a fixture at the Vale, I hear. I scarcely think that you have treated your father well, though. A more distressed creature I have seldom seen, and it would not surprise me if he did something desperate. Such a man as Leo would be capable even of committing suicide under the pressure of such mental suffering as he was enduring when he went away from us."

Isola looked distressed, but she said:

"I did what General Berkeley and Miss Carleton thought right. I am sorry that my—that Senator Roselli took it so much to heart. If I had gone with him, I should have been miserable, and—"

The senator interrupted her with a sneer:

"Say no more, child. I see that you think more of your own comfort and happiness than of anything else. I expected nothing better of you, and I warned poor Leo beforehand how the affair must end. A daughter, sustained in her disobedience by powerful friends, can, of course, send her humble father drifting down the tide; but I must say that your selfishness and hard-heartedness are unparalleled in my experience."

"I will bid you good-afternoon, madam," said Isola, proudly. "I acted with the approbation of as noble and true people as live on earth, and I do not choose to hear myself denounced in such terms."

The hard eyes of the senator watched her with an expression of triumph as she seated herself. Her thin lips unclosed, and she muttered:

"Go—go—meet what is on your path, and free me for ever from your dangerous presence."

The sun was rapidly sinking in the horizon; but as the night promised to be brilliantly clear, with a moon that was nearly full, Isola had no apprehensions as to her safety.

They had gained a deep hollow which lay between the two places, at a point where four roads diverged; there, to his surprise, the coachman found that a large tree had fallen across the road, completely barring all progress in the direction of the Vale.

Giving the reins into Isola's hands, he got out to see if there was no chance to get around it; but he had scarcely commenced his explorations, when two men sprang upon him, seized and bound him fast, at the same time thrusting a gag into his mouth.

Isola shrieked, and made an effort to spring from the carriage, that she might attempt to make her escape; but the taller of the two men grasped her arm, and in a voice that paralyzed her, said:

"Do not be alarmed, my angel child. I found that I could not give you up, and this was the only chance left to me. I have left your friend's money untouched, for I cannot give my treasure up for worldly goods. The driver shall not be injured; he shall only go with us to a point a few miles hence, and then return with his carriage in safety."

He put his arm around her, and lifted her back into the vehicle; but, by this time, all power of resistance had left her, and she was lying in a dead faint upon his breast.

Making no effort to restore her, Roselli placed her upon the seat, and gathered the reins in his own hands, for the high-bred horses were beginning to show some signs of restiveness. He gave a few rapid directions to his companion, who had retained the coachman in his charge, and that individual was laid down on the front of the carriage, with a covering over his eyes, and a stern command not to attempt to lift it, at his peril.

Turning the horses' heads towards one of the cross roads, a touch of the whip sent them flying over the frozen snow at a rate of speed to which they had never before been put. Trees, houses, fences seemed to fly behind them; and when the keen air again re-

lived Isola, she saw that the road was one with which she was not familiar. She raised herself up, and faintly asked:

"What does this mean? What do you intend to do with me, sir?"

"It means that I cannot live without you, my precious one; that I should have died if I had not gained possession of you. I have spent three days of torture since I last looked on you; and I could no longer bear it. Oh, my Clari, give me a little place in your heart, and I shall feel myself blessed."

"And is it really your purpose to tear me from all I love?" she asked, in a faltering voice.

"You break my heart—you crush my life, by speaking thus! Who can be nearer to you than your own father? Have I not sought you, with a weary heart, through long years of agony? and now—now! Oh! holy mother, inspire this estranged heart with some feeling of compassion for the father who loves her as the one hope of his life!"

The speaker was a good actor, and the anguish that seemed to thrill through his voice aroused in the heart of Isola a feeling of remorse that she had been so hard towards him. If Miss Carlotta was wrong in her judgment of him, and this man was really her father, she felt that her conduct to him had been far from what he had a right to expect from her.

She sunk into silence, and endeavoured to arrange her confused thoughts; to stifle the tumult of conflicting emotions that assailed her. But, in spite of all her efforts to control it, the repulsion felt towards her pretended father, from the first moment of their meeting, could not be silenced. She drew as far away from him as she possibly could, and sat weeping and trembling. At length she ventured to ask:

"What is your purpose? Whither are you taking me? and what is to be my fate?"

"Your fate shall be as happy and serene as that of the angels in heaven, for I am going to place you where trouble and worldly care are unknown. In twenty-four hours we shall be on the ocean, sailing towards the beautiful land of your birth, and there we will both find an asylum which will prove to us a foretaste of Paradise."

"And you will tear me from my home—from those I love, in this cruel manner! If you were really my father, you could not do this."

Roselli laid aside his caressing tones, and spoke with stern emphasis.

"General Berkeley admitted the validity of my claim; then why do you, wilful and perverse girl, dare to doubt my truth? You have insulted me—you have wounded my honour in a vital manner, and I resent it, even to you. Be silent, and understand that henceforth I have the entire control over your fate, and you shall not escape the destiny I have awarded to you. We are drawing near the station, and I command you to conduct yourself with the respect that is due to me. However, I shall take measures to prevent any scene, without reference to your wishes."

A large railway station was now in sight, and in a few moments Roselli knew that the train would be due. Relating the speed of the horses, he suddenly threw his arm around Isola, and placed a handkerchief saturated with chloroform over her face. The night was so cold that no strugglers were around the station, and when he drew up in front of it, he cut the cords that bound the coachman's arms, and imperiously said:

"Get up, and take the reins. Go back to your master, and tell him that Signor Roselli has taken his daughter under his own protection. Stop on the road, or speak to any one, at your peril; and feel happy that I have let you off so easily."

As he thus spoke, he lifted the unconscious Isola from the carriage, and, chilled to the heart, half frightened out of his wits, the coachman could only say:

"Yes."

"Be off with you, and see that you mind what I have said."

He gave a cut to the spirited steeds, and they sprung onward again. The coachman retained sufficient presence of mind to turn their heads in the direction of the Vale, and in a few moments the carriage was out of sight.

In a few moments the piercing whistle of the engine was heard; then a rush, a whirl, and the train came thundering into the station. Amid the confusion and babel of sounds that ensued, Roselli placed the passive girl on her feet, threw his arm around her, and thus carried her into one of the railway carriages.

He found but few passengers, and to those who manifested any interest in the unhappy girl, he stated that she was suffering from partial paralysis, and he was taking her to a celebrated physician, in the hope that she would be restored by his skillful treatment.

Isola was vaguely conscious of all that was passing around her, but she had only power to moan faintly; at the first stopping place Roselli forced her to drink a

glass of wine, into which he had infused a powerful narcotic. This soon threw her into so deep a sleep that he had no further trouble with her till they reached the seaport whence Roselli intended to embark.

Their passage was already taken in, a sailing vessel bound for Bordeaux by a faithful agent to whom Roselli had telegraphed; this man was awaiting them with a carriage, which conveyed them at once to the wharf, alongside of which lay the *Rosena*.

From that point all trace of Isola was lost. In spite of the most strenuous efforts made by her friends to discover whither she had been taken, no light was thrown on her fate.

On the return of the coachman to the Vale with the startling news he had to unfold, everything was in commotion there. A telegram was at once despatched along the line, ordering the arrest of Roselli; but the planners of this daring scheme of abduction were prepared for this, and it was found that the wires had been cut within a few miles of the station. Of course the damage could not be repaired till the following day, and in the meantime Roselli effected his escape with his prize.

The news soon reached Fountains, but it was carefully concealed from its master, and, after the first feeling of astonishment was over, Savella almost rejoiced that a rival she regarded with a jealous heart was effectually removed from the vicinity of Philip. She believed Roselli to be Isola's father; and she thought it right that she should be compelled to go with him, if she refused of her own free will.

Late on the following evening Somerton and Philip returned from town, both expressing dismay at the disappearance of Isola, and disapprobation of the violent course pursued by Roselli.

The seniors and her accomplices availed themselves of the first opportunity to converse in private, and she gleefully said:

"We are rid of her at last! You were very clever, Thomas, and arranged everything in the best manner. Who assisted Leo to capture her?"

"I did, of course. I left Mr. Vane in town, and hurried back to rejoin Leo, so skillfully disguised that she could not have known me even in daylight. We had no trouble, for the coachman was easy enough to manage; and when the girl heard the voice of Roselli, she understood her position at once, and fainted dead away. By this time she's safe on the ocean, and all we have now to do is to carry out our plans here. Philip is ripe for them, and ready to do what we wish. He has had an interview with a shrewd lawyer, and ascertained that Savella's claim to the whole estate is good. It will barely pay the amount due to her. Philip wishes to live in Paris, and he intends to offer the property at private sale as soon as the necessary legal formalities have put him in possession of it. He will make a liberal provision for Fontaine, and place him where he will be well taken care of. Then we will all go to France, with nothing to do but enjoy 'the goods the gods provide.'"

"That is good news, indeed. You must possess magical power over Philip to induce him to enter into our views in so brief a time."

"The fact is, Vane is miserable here. He is not quite a villain, though he has acted in a most unprincipled manner. Having sold himself for money, he now feels that he must risk everything to retain possession of it. It's a pity that a sharper should retain any feeling of shame or honour, for it mars his enjoyment of his winnings most confoundingly. I have rid myself of all that nonsense long ago, and now I have secured the means, I intend to live a famously jolly life. *Ta-la-la!*"

"Do remember where you are, Thomas? If the family overhear you singing in that manner, they will think your clerical character badly sustained."

He snapped his fingers, and made a pirouette.

"Why should I care now if they do? A few more months of restraint, and I will lay aside the cassock for ever. It has done me good service, though; and I won't abuse it. You have done your part well, too, Bianca; but you were wrong in one thing. You should have left that girl to her fate the night she was so ill. I am half afraid that Leo will bungle the affair and let her be a plague to us yet."

"Not he—he will obey my commands literally, for he is not to draw his annuity till she is safe beyond the reach of any one who may seek a clue to her fate. Trust me for that."

(To be continued.)

THE WEDDING FINGER.—There are few objects among the productions of art contemplated with such lively interest by ladies, after a certain age, as the wedding ring; this has been the theme for poets of every calibre—for geniuses of every wing, from the dabbling duckling to the soaring eagle. The mouldy antiquary can tell the origin of the custom with which

it is connected, and perchance why a ring is round, and account for many circumstances concerning the ceremony of the circle, on the most conclusive evidence, amounting to absolute conjectural demonstration. Amidst all that has been said and written in reference to the ring, we believe the more lovely part engaged in the mystic matter, the taper residence of this ornament, has been neglected. Now this is rather curious, as there are facts which belong to the ring finger which render it, in a peculiar manner, an appropriate emblem of matrimonial union. It is the only finger where two principal nerves belong to two distinct trunks; the thumb is supplied with its principal nerves from the radial nerve, as is also the forefinger, the middle finger, and the thumb side of the ring finger, while the ulnar nerve furnishes the little finger and the other side of the ring finger, at the point or extremity of which a real union takes place. It seems as if it were intended by nature to be the matrimonial finger. That the side of the ring finger next the little finger is supplied by the ulnar nerve, is frequently proved by a common accident, that of striking the elbow against the edge of a chair, a door, or any narrow hard substance; the ulnar nerve is then frequently struck, and a thrilling sensation is felt in the little finger, and on the same side of the ring finger, but not on the other side of it.

THE VITAL PRINCIPLE.

What is animal life? This question has perplexed the world for ages, and is still in dispute. If the medical faculty could solve it, they would have a key to the origin of all diseases, and need no longer treat us by guess, as they too frequently do now.

"The life is in the blood," we are told on high authority; but the grand problem in medical philosophy is not where is it? but what is it? The priests of Chaldea and Egypt consulted the stars upon the subject, but obtained no answers of any practical value.

The Greeks studied the laws of nature thoughtfully, but failed to fathom the great secret. Modern doctors have argued the point very learnedly, and given us a multitude of opinions thereupon; but the common sense of mankind is not entirely satisfied with any of them. Neither the subtle logic of the metaphysician nor the knife of the anatomist has been able to determine positively what animal life is.

Pythagoras, and most of the ancient sages, believed the vital spirit to be invisible fire. Epicurus—who, by the way, was a man of immense mind—insisted that it was a compound of heat and gas.

Among the moderns, John Wesley, Dr. Priestly, Sir Humphry Davy, Abernethy, and many others maintain that electricity or magnetism is the animating element. The late Dr. Metcalf, one of our own distinguished men of science, held caloric or latent heat to be the basis of vitality, and supposed electricity, its emanation, to be the active vital principle.

That atmospheric heat is intimately connected with this principle, is evident from its influence in the production of innumerable forms of animal and vegetable existence.

Of the million and a half of animal and vegetable species which the earth is estimated to contain, perhaps three-fourths inhabit regions where there is no winter. The whole tropical ocean may be said to be alive, while, within the Arctic Circle, life is sparsely scattered, and what there is of it is comparatively sluggish.

Summer in all latitudes is the nurse, if not the parent of myriads of existences, and it is obvious that if the world were deprived of solar heat, every living thing would die. We know that when the vital spark has been apparently extinguished in fish and reptiles by the action of the cold, it can be rekindled by the application of heat. Fish that have been frozen, and have remained in that condition for twelve months, may be thawed back to life.

FEMALE VALUES.—The degraded position of woman in China is well known. Nothing so much astonishes a Chinaman, who visits European merchants at Hong Kong, as the deference which is paid to the ladies, and the position which they occupy in society. The servants even express their disgust to see ladies take their seats at the same table with gentlemen, wondering how men can so far forget their dignity. A few years ago a young English merchant was accompanied by his youthful bride to Hong Kong, where the couple were visited by a wealthy mandarin. The latter regarded the lady attentively, and seemed to dwell with delight on her movements. When she at length left the room, the mandarin said to the husband, in his imperfect English:—"What you give for that wifey of yours?" "Oh," replied the husband, laughing at the singular error of his visitor, "a thousand pounds." This, our merchant thought, would

appear to the Chinaman a rather high figure, but he was mistaken. "Well," said the mandarin, taking out his purse, with an air of business, "I give you five thousand pounds." It is difficult to say whether the young merchant was more amazed or amused; but the grave air of the Chinaman convinced him that he was in earnest, and he was compelled, therefore, to refuse the offer, with as much placidity as he could assume. The mandarin, however, continued pressing, and went as high as seven thousand pounds. The merchant, who had no previous notions of the value of the commodity which he had taken out with him, was compelled at length to declare that Englishmen never sold their wives after they once came in possession of them—an assertion which the Chinaman was slow to believe. The merchant afterwards had a hearty laugh with his spouse, when he told her that he had just discovered her full value, as the mandarin had offered him seven thousand pounds for her.

ROMAN REMAINS AT SHIELDS.—The workmen at present engaged in lowering the hill approaching Walbottle Dean have come upon a Roman gateway in perfect preservation. It is composed of massive blocks of stone, the free space for the gate, which had been apparently in two divisions, being 10 ft., and in a line with the wall. Traces of ornamentation are distinctly visible on some of the stones, more particularly on that portion of the pillars which, as the gate now stands, fronted the north; and it is curious to observe the rock-work now so generally used in railway masonry on the Roman remains. The workmen have left the gateway standing where they found it; but it must speedily be removed, to make way for the improvement now being carried forward at Walbottle Dean. Perhaps the Duke of Northumberland, or the Society of Antiquaries, may be able to dispose of it in some convenient place.

EUGENE D'AZINCOURT.

At a fancy ball in London, I saw, for the first time, Eugene D'Azincourt.

In the gay and splendid crowd of princes and nobles, and women of rank and beauty, I observed a tall, pale man, in a plain black domino. His features were eminently handsome, but there was an extreme sadness about the exquisitely cut mouth and in the expression of the dark eyes, which, together with the unsuitable plainness of his dress, offered a marked contrast with the brilliant scene around him.

He seemed to take little or no interest in the glittering train of kings and queens, knights and troubadours, courtiers and crusaders, Romeos and Julietts, buffoons and Benedicks that swept past him with lively jests and merry laughter.

Curious to know something of so extraordinary a person, I inquired his name of a friend.

"That," he said, "is Eugene D'Azincourt, the most unfortunate man in all England."

"Why unfortunate?"

"In every respect. If it can be said of any one that he was born to misfortune, Eugene D'Azincourt is that man. From his infancy, nay, from his very birth, misery has marked him for her own. His father was the head of one of the noblest families; his mother was the daughter of a French marquis, who had fled to the hospitable shores of Albion from the tyranny of Robespierre. The noble fell in love with the beautiful Julie D'Azincourt, and they were secretly married. She died in giving birth to Eugene. His father, who had never acknowledged the marriage, was, at the time, ambassador at the Court of Spain. He returned to England, but died suddenly, without seeing his son; and the vast possessions of the family went to the next heir."

"And what became of Eugene?"

"His grandfather, M. D'Azincourt, took charge of him. This noble Frenchman, who had been reared in the lap of luxury, earned a scanty livelihood by teaching his language to ladies and gentlemen in London. By the strictest economy, he was able to give Eugene a liberal education. Soon after young D'Azincourt had completed his brilliant course at college, the Bourbons were restored to the throne of France, and the marquis returned to claim his former property."

"The first use which he made of his recovered wealth was to allow Eugene to spend a year in foreign travel."

"Young D'Azincourt was now in his twentieth year, elegant and fascinating in his manners, generous and noble in disposition, and possessing a highly cultivated mind. Full of bright hopes, he departed on his journey. Perhaps the next few months were the happiest (indeed, the only really happy ones) in Eugene's life."

"He visited the stately cities and venerable towns of Germany, and lingered for weeks in the vicinity of the enchanting Rhine; thence he passed to the south,

and roamed with heartfelt delight among the vine-clad hills of sunny France; next Spain welcomed him to her fragrant groves and beautiful cities; hours were sweetly dreamed away in the cool recesses of the Alhambra."

"D'Azincourt was particularly impressed with this noble monument of Moslem pride and glory. His romantic imagination filled those deserted halls with all the splendid pageantry of an Eastern court; rich music resounded through the empty corridors; the sumptuous feast was spread, and the gorgeous train rolled along."

"Eugene tore himself from these scenes of witchery and enchantment to visit Rome, where he wished to arrive in time to witness the imposing ceremonies of Christmas, at St. Peter's. It was during D'Azincourt's residence at the Eternal City that an event occurred which was destined, in the end, to change his whole life."

"One dark night, when returning from the opera long the Via Babuino, he heard cries of distress proceeding from the direction of the Piazza di Spagna. He hastened to the spot, and discovered a lady in the rude grasp of a ruffian."

"With one blow of his cane Eugene felled the rascal to the earth, and, supporting the girl on his arm (she was young, not more than seventeen, and exceedingly beautiful), he inquired whether she was hurt. Her voice was full of tears, but ravishingly sweet, as she replied:

"No, thanks to your timely assistance, I am unhurt; but my brother—save him—he will be murdered—see—he falls! Oh, God, he is killed!"

"D'Azincourt had not noticed two men engaged in a hand-to-hand combat several yards distant. The frantic cries and wild gestures of the young lady drew his attention to them, and he rushed to the spot."

"A gigantic ruffian stood over the prostrate form of a young man, his deadly stiletto was raised, and he was in the act of giving the *coup de grâce* to his already bleeding foe, when Eugene came up, and dashed the weapon out of his hand."

"The villain, baffled in his murderous design, turned, with tigerlike ferocity, to confront his new antagonist."

"One glance at D'Azincourt's splendidly developed person was sufficient to deter him from a doubtful struggle; and with his wicked eyes fairly blazing with hate and revenge, he beat a hasty retreat, muttering frightful curses and threats."

"Eugene now turned to the assistance of the wounded man."

"His sister was stooping over him, staunching a severe wound in his breast, with all a woman's tender devotion."

"Edmund, are you much hurt?" she said, in a trembling voice. "Speak to me—speak to Helen, your sister."

"He opened his eyes, and faintly replied:

"I am so very, very weak. I feel as if I were dying."

"Oh! no, no, no! You shall not die, dear Edmund!"

"Where am I, and who is this gentleman?" he asked, as his languid eyes fell upon Eugene D'Azincourt."

"You are in the street, and this gentleman has rescued us from the wicked men who attempted to rob and murder us."

"Lady, your brother must be removed at once to his home, that his wound may be properly attended to," said Eugene."

"The distance is very short, sir," Helen answered, "but Edmund is so very weak, I am afraid he will be unequal to the task."

"Eugene happily had a small flask of invigorating cordial in his pocket, which he applied to the lips of the fainting youth. The stimulating liquor imparted new strength to Edmund. With Eugene's assistance, he arose, and, supported by him and Helen, managed to totter feebly along. On the way, D'Azincourt told them his name and family, and was informed that they were the son and daughter of Lord and Lady Hermange, of Hermange Castle; that the family were spending the winter in Italy for the benefit of Edmund's health."

"The arrival of the pale and bleeding youth caused great consternation in Lord Hermange's family. His mother rushed down in an agony of grief, and threw her arms around the neck of her darling boy; his father fervently thanked God that his noble son—the pride of his heart, and the hope of his family—was spared; the servants came around, with sorrowful faces, eager to do something for their young master—for Edmund's sweet and gentle disposition made him a favourite with all."

"Lord Hermange and Eugene helped Edmund to his chamber, where a surgeon soon came to dress his wound. After due examination, the surgeon said, with a very grave face:

"An ugly hurt, indeed; a very ugly hurt, but not necessarily dangerous. With proper care and attention, he will pull through this affair. But he must be kept quiet," continued the surgeon, who was an English practitioner, settled in Rome; the young gentleman must be kept very quiet, and free from excitement. The great danger in such cases is fever; otherwise, you need have no apprehensions for the result," and the skilful Dr. Quackenbos bowed himself out of the room."

"The doctor gone, and Edmund falling into a refreshing slumber, they left him in charge of his nurse, and retired to the drawing-room. Helen presented Eugene D'Azincourt to her father and mother, and gave an account of the evening's adventure, in which the young gentleman had played so important a part. The young lady was so exceedingly lovely, and her language so eloquent, that Eugene thought himself the most fortunate man in the world in having won her gratitude. Lord and Lady Hermange thanked him with unaffected warmth. His lordship had known the Marquis D'Azincourt in England, and expressed himself most happy in making the acquaintance of his grandson. They were so extremely agreeable that it was long past midnight before Eugene took his departure."

"Of course, the next day, young D'Azincourt called at Lord Hermange's palace, to ask after Edmund and to learn how Helen had rested after her accident. It so happened that Lord Hermange was out on business; and his lady being engaged with Edmund, Helen alone came down to receive the visitor. I have not described Helen Hermange. Every young man of warm and enthusiastic feelings has, once in his life, seen a woman for whom he would willingly live or die. Such was Helen Hermange. No man could see her without admiring—few without loving her. There was a charm, a fascination, about her, which all felt who came into her presence. Her eyes—the windows of the soul—were gloriously beautiful and wonderfully expressive; in repose, they were of the softest violet hue; when moved by passion, they became dark, brilliant, and magnificent. Her lips were twin rosebuds; her teeth exquisitely white, and when those pearly gates opened, there gushed forth the sweetest sounds that ever ravished mortal ears. Ulysses, who withstood the alluring melody of the sirens, could not have resisted the musical voice of Helen Hermange."

"Eugene D'Azincourt was young, ardent, and an enthusiastic admirer of beauty. Is it strange that he should almost instantly love—fondly, devotedly love—Helen Hermange?"

"Helen Hermange was young, ardent, and an enthusiastic admirer of courage and elegance. Is it strange that she should soon learn to love Eugene D'Azincourt?"

"She had witnessed his gallantry and courage when he rescued Edmund and herself from the ruffians. She was more and more impressed by his polish and elegance each time she saw him."

"Women take more notice and are better judges of fine manners than men are. Their minds are more delicate, more refined, and they possess an exquisite appreciation of those elegant trifles which are so pleasingly shown by the well-bred man."

"Eugene was a true gentleman, and had a chivalrous gallantry for women, which he had inherited from his grandfather, the marquis, who had been one of the most polished noblemen in the court of Louis XVI."

"After Eugene's accidental introduction to Lord Hermange's family, he became a constant and welcome visitor at their palace. Anyone who has been a stranger in a great city will easily understand how D'Azincourt's residence in Rome was rendered ten times more agreeable by this intimate acquaintance. Helen became his daily companion—together they visited the most interesting sights in the most interesting city in the world; by daylight, St. Peter's, the most august temple on earth; by moonlight, the Colosseum, the stateliest ruin of antiquity, the galleries of art, rich in the divine creations of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and other great artists, were a never-failing attraction."

"Eugene and Helen visited many palaces and gardens in the vicinity of Rome. One bright, beautiful afternoon, toward the end of winter, they drove to the valley of Egeria, so celebrated, in Roman history and song, as the spot to which Numa retired to commune with his own soul, amid the solitudes of nature."

"They lingered there, until the early moon threw her silvery mantle over the place; then, in the witchery of that sweet hour, Eugene ventured to tell his love, and, with a delicious thrill, found that he had not loved in vain."

"When young D'Azincourt asked Lord Hermange for the hand of his daughter, the latter was pleased to say that, if he searched the world over, he could not have found a son-in-law more to his liking than the

grandson of the Marquis D'Azincourt. And he was right; the match was, in every way, suitable: they were young, beautiful, ardent, of equal fortune and family. Helen had much of the southern nature; she was more like an Italian or Spaniard, than an Englishwoman; her love was deep, undying; when she loved, she loved for ever.

"Jean Paul says, 'we should tremble in the midst of the great happiness!' and the poet writes: The sunniest things throw brightest shade, And there is even a happiness That makes the heart afraid."

"Eugene D'Azincourt's happiness had reached its culminating point, and soon commenced the dread decline. Only a few weeks had passed since the whispered vows were spoken in the valley of Egeria—weeks of sweet, bright, day dreams—weeks, the days of which were linked by flowers—when Eugene was summoned to his grandfather's bedside in Paris."

"He arrived just in time to close the eyes of his beloved relative. The marquis made a will, leaving, of course, the bulk of his fortune to Eugene, who inherited the titles, recommending to his care his (the marquis') niece, Madame Larose, and her daughter, Emilie. Eugene had never seen his aunt or cousin, who lived in the South of France; but as soon as he had arranged the affairs of the late marquis, he visited them, and asked his aunt to preside over his establishment in Paris. She gladly consented, and the three immediately departed for the gay capital."

"The journey was enlivened by the agreeable vivacity of Eugene's cousin. Emilie Larose was a lovely brunette, with dark hair, and flashing eyes. When she laughed, (and she laughed often), she displayed a most brilliant set of teeth. D'Azincourt's manner toward his cousin was so exceedingly courteous, that Madame Larose, who was an ambitious little woman looked forward to the day when her daughter would be Madame la Marquise."

"Eugene found a letter at Paris from Helen Hermange, announcing their arrival in London, where they intended to remain during May and June. As the renovations of his hotel would not be completed for a month or six weeks, the young marquis decided to pass that time in London, and asked his cousin to accompany him. They left Paris on the fifteenth of May, and the next day reached London. Eugene's position was greatly different from what it was when he resided in the British metropolis the year before. Then he occupied humble lodgings in an obscure part of the town, and lived unobscured and unknown. Now he lived in a grand hotel at the west-end, was the possessor of a proud title and a large fortune, and a distinguished member of two or three fashionable clubs."

"Of course, Eugene's first visit was to his fiancée. Helen was as sweet, as loving, and as beautiful as when he parted from her, three months before, in Rome."

"Eugene thought that Lord and Lady Hermange were excessively polite and gracious to their future son-in-law. Edmund was the same sweet, gentle, winning youth."

"A great deal of Eugene's time was, necessarily, passed with his cousin. She was devoted to music, and they frequently went to the opera. She was fond of riding, and they rode together in Hyde Park. She loved balls and parties, and Eugene took her to all the fashionable assemblies, where her bright eyes and exquisite figure excited the admiration of the men and the envy of the women."

"It was generally reported in the fashionable world that the young Marquis D'Azincourt was going to marry his charming cousin, Emilie Larose. These reports, as a matter of course, came to the ears of Helen Hermange, and made her proud heart swell with indignation."

"The next time Eugene came to see her, there was a coldness in her manner which he could not help observing."

"Why is my Helen so cold and distant?" he asked.

"Your Helen?" she repeated, with bitter emphasis; "I am no longer your Helen. Do you think, Eugene D'Azincourt, that Helen Hermange will accept a divided heart? No; I must reign supreme, or not at all."

"Lady, what means this strange language?" "It means, Marquis D'Azincourt, that you are false to your plighted vows—it means that I know of your attentions—your engagement—to Mademoiselle Larose."

"Emilie Larose is my cousin—' Cousin! Men are not generally so attentive to their cousins. Why try to disguise from me the truth? It is needless to prolong this interview—take back this ring, which you gave me in days gone by, when you thought you loved me. It were better we had never met than to part thus. Eugene D'Azincourt, farewell, for ever!"

"Helen Hermange, beware of what you do."

"No more; leave me—leave me!" exclaimed the proud and passionate girl.

"And thus, by a wretched misunderstanding, was severed the golden chain that bound two loving hearts together. Helen believed Eugene faithless; but did she love him less? Ah, no; she loved him more now that she had lost him. It was her first—her only love. She could not forget those delicious hours which his presence and his love had transformed into Elysian bliss. She could not forget those eyes which, erewhile, glowed with the sweet eloquence of the master-passion of the human heart. She could not bear the terrible awakening from a dream so ravishing; she could not bear to see all her fond hopes dashed to the ground, and in the wild frenzy of her deep despair, she threw herself, unbidden, into the hands of the living God!"

"D'Azincourt was fearfully shocked by this tragical death of the woman he had adored. In his overwhelming grief, he plunged into the wildest dissipation of London. His health was shattered, and his fortune impaired by his mad career. Other misfortunes were in store for this doomed man. In a tavern brawl one of his dearest friends was killed, and he was accused of the murder, though he had risked his life in the defence of the murdered man. He narrowly escaped an ignominious death; and it was a long time before his innocence was perfectly established. Lastly, the woman with whom he was betrayed into marriage by an infamous system of deceit, eloped with the man who called himself his friend, and she artfully contrived, that, in the eyes of the world, all the blame should rest with him."

"The unfortunate D'Azincourt believes himself pursued by a malignant and inexorable fate, and he has long ceased to hope for anything like happiness on this side of the grave. He lives among men like a being from another world; he mingles with them like an unsympathising ghost. Like Childe Harold, his griefs, his passions, his tears make him a stranger. There is nothing for this unhappy man—crushed, dejected, and tortured as he is—but to lay down his weary, wounded head, and to die!"

THE WARNING VOICE.

By the Author of "Mrs. Larkall's Boarding School," "Man and his Idol," &c.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"HE LIVES—HE IS IN ENGLAND!"

What ails you, sir? You are convulsed. Sir! sir! What ails you? Speak to me! Or can't you speak, Or don't you hear? You shake from head to foot.

The Secretary.

WHEN Cecil Ingarstone came to himself, he was no longer in the river.

The oozy mud was not stifling him, and there was no ominous gurgle in his ears, deadening them to all other sounds but its own, and that the murmur of Death.

He was lying upon a bed.

His head sank deep, deep into the luxurious softness of down pillows, covered with the finest of linen, and fringed with lace. And as he slowly raised his languid eyelids, he found that they were daintily shaded with rose-tinted curtains, and that the luxurious bed was only one item in the furniture of a superb sleeping-chamber.

"What has happened? Where am I?" were his first and most natural inquiries.

That he was not in his own room at Ingarstone was abundantly clear; but how he came where he now found himself was a mystery, and the greater as for the moment he failed to recall any of his movements on that memorable night to which we have alluded.

"Surely this is not Rodgrave's place?" he asked himself, sitting up in bewilderment.

No, it was not that. Instinctively he arrived at that conclusion, and was casting about him for further information, when, chancing to glance toward the window, he saw his clothes spread out on chairs, so as to have the full benefit of the sunshine, which was streaming in upon them. And they needed it, for they were in a deplorable condition. They had been saturated with wet; they were muddy, and down the back of the coat there was a great splash of blood, red in the sunlight.

The sight of these articles recalled instantaneously to the young man's memory all that had happened.

His mission—his midnight watching—the mysterious house, outside of which he had waited so many hours—the strange place by the waterside, with the beacon-light set to lure the unwary—and, lastly, the treacherous blow that had been aimed at him—all burst on his mind simultaneously.

"And Dora!" he exclaimed aloud. "What of her? Is she waiting in doubt and uncertainty all this time? Is she racking her gentle heart for me and my safety, fearing the worst, dreading the darkest fate that could

have befallen me? By heaven! Not another moment!"

He sprang from the bed with sudden energy; but found that he was weak and tottering, and unable to stand. He must have been ill, he felt—perhaps very ill; and now that he moved, there was a pain at the back of his head, like raging fire.

Still, he resolved to dress himself and away.

Dora must not be kept another instant in suspense—in torture as to his fate. Of that he was resolved; and so he set to work, very slowly and very feebly, to get into his garments. It took a long time; and while he was about it, his mind reverted to the questions, "Where was he? How did he get there?" Then came another question, "Should he be allowed to depart?"

With a view of deciding the latter question, he staggered to the door, and laid his hand upon the handle. It did not yield. The door was locked, and he was a prisoner.

Aghast at this discovery—for he did not know into whose hands he had fallen—he staggered back towards the bed, and sitting down, buried his face in his hands and bethought him what he should do.

Should he wait, or should he ring?

Waiting was out of the question, with the phantom of the horror his fate would produce on Dora constantly before his mind; so with nervous hands he ventured to give a vigorous tug at the bell-handle beside the bed.

It seemed an age before there was any response.

Minute after minute dragged its slow length along; then there came a sound of a key turned in the lock, and the door opened.

It was the Donna Ximena who entered and confronted the bewildered youth.

Her aspect was stern. She walked with her head erect, and had a proud, firm bearing. If her face expressed any feeling, it was that of scorn or contempt.

"Again, Cecil Ingarstone," she said, "I have saved your life."

He did not reply; he seemed too weak to do so.

"Do you hear me?" demanded the imperious woman; "once more I have snatched you from death. Once more, in your case, I have returned good for evil—if it be a good to preserve your worthless existence."

"It was to you, then—" Cecil began.

"To me? Yes," she interrupted. "But for me, you would be lying in the river-bed, the victim of your own folly—your own drivelling folly, and miserable imprudence."

"Is this your house?" he asked, as if anxious to avoid the main question.

"It is," she retorted sharply; "heaven knows what risks I ran in bringing you here, what scandals it will give rise to, or how it will injure my reputation or fair fame. I have risked all that because—because I am a fool, I think, for I can offer no sane reason for my conduct. It isn't because I love you, or hate you—certainly not because I fear you."

She said this with such marked emphasis as to suggest that this really was the reason.

"I have no cause for that, as you know," she went on.

"Yet your proceedings are not altogether free from doubt or suspicion," Cecil answered.

"And what then?—it is not you who will betray me," she retorted, angrily.

"That will depend," replied the young man, quietly. "Depend?"

She uttered the word with a face and manner betraying the utmost astonishment, not unmixed with consternation.

"Do you know what you say?" she asked. "Do you forget what there is between us?" Has your memory gone in this illness? Or are you becoming reckless?"

Cecil shook his head.

"I have forgotten nothing," he said.

"And yet you threaten? You adopt a tone of menace toward me?"

"No," replied Cecil; "but I reserve to myself the right to act as I think fit. Granted that you are in possession of a perilous secret. Granted that you may have it in your power to inflict misery and degradation on those I hold most dear. There are still two sides to the question. I am a man of honour, of uprightness, and integrity, and it may be that I may see it my duty to incur even this evil, rather than lend myself as an accomplice to transactions at which my very soul revolts."

The face of the listening woman was at a white heat with anger.

"You dare me," she said.

"I warn you, rather. I tell you what my feelings are, and what my principles are, and what I may be driven to do."

"Take care," said the angry woman; "take care. Cecil Ingarstone—you know me, and you know of what I am capable. I am deterred by nothing. I

have no such weaknesses as commiseration or remorse. If I have spared you and yours so long, it is because I have been too indolent to put the machinery in motion, or, to be frank with you, because I have not had occasion to use my secret for my profit. But I caution you that I may not always be thus lenient. And, above all, I warn you now, as I warned you when last we met, to beware how you interfere or interpose between me and my projects. I have a part to play, and I will play it my own way. I will not be watched or dogged, or impeded. I will have no spy upon my actions; and least of all will I suffer you to assume that character."

"I have seen too much," replied Cecil, calmly, "to be easily silenced or repulsed."

"You must forget what you have seen," the woman said, decisively.

"Your designs are too infamous," he proceeded, without heeding her; "and the audacity with which you pursue them is too open and transparent."

"Yet he does not suspect," she retorted.

"It is because he is infatuated."

"As it is right he should be," she returned. "For what was my beauty given me? For what was I invested with the fascination which even you have not wholly escaped? Why have I improved my natural graces and attractions by all the charms of art? In all this there is but one purpose. As the serpent fascinates his victim before he strikes, so I use all this to allure, and charm, and overpower, before I make my final spring."

"But you forget that this—this victim—of whom you speak is my friend," rejoined Cecil.

"Your friend!" was her contemptuous exclamation.

"Yes; and one whom I feel bound in honour to warn, if not to rescue."

"And why?"

"For this, if for no other reason: that I have myself contributed to the state of blind confidence into which he has sunk. When I first beheld you under his roof, my course was clear. As an honourable man, my path was marked out to me clearly as the noon-day. I ought at once, and without hesitation, to have said—'This woman is an impostor!'"

"Take care!"

"This woman is an adventuress. She is not the patrician she represents herself to be. She is not of Spanish descent—except it may be through some muddy gipsy stream. She has no ancestors, no alliance with any noble family. She has no wealth, no connections that are not a disgrace to her. She has designs against your happiness and your property. She is dangerous, and I warn you against any encouragement you may bestow upon her! This is how I ought to have spoken, I did not. I yielded to a base fear. I was silent, and out of my silence grew this double evil—not only were their suspicions not aroused, but they were soothed to rest."

"And so soothed they must remain," said the donna.

"No."

"Do I understand you—no?"

"That was my word."

She had been standing until this. Now she sat down beside the little table at which he sat, and resting her hands upon it, looked fiercely across into his eyes.

"You know my power!" she said.

An impatient toss of the head was his reply.

"You know what it is that I can bring down upon you?"

"Yes."

"You know that at this very moment you are in my hands—that no one is aware of your presence here, and no one would be the wiser if you never quitted these walls alive?"

"I have no fear."

"No, and no discretion either. But knowing all this, it is your wish that there should be war between us two—war to the knife—war to the death?"

"It is not my wish: it is my only alternative."

"Not while you can retire as you came. Keep your suspicions and surmises to yourself. Attend to your own game. Leave me to fight mine—is not this an alternative?"

"Yes, if you would give me any promise or make any sort of condition with me."

"Touching what?"

"Touching my friend—your victim—Redgrave."

"Surely," cried the donna, with a scornful smile, "he is old enough and man enough to look after his own affairs! He is not a child or an idiot; he needs neither a guardian nor a keeper. Since when has this new chivalry of friendship sprung up?"

He did not answer her.

The taunting, sarcastic tone in which she spoke pained him inexpressibly.

After a few moments' hesitation, he asked, abruptly:

"That house to which you went last night—the first one—what was its character?"

"Simply a friend's house," she replied, with embarrassment.

"And you went there as a friend?"

"Partly—partly for amusement."

"You mean—play?"

"Well?"

"It is a gambling house which you frequent?"

"Well?"

"And that other resort to which I tracked you—that miserable hovel by the water-side—what place is that?"

"That is my banker's."

An impudent smile played over her handsome features as, looking at him with increased audacity, she made this answer.

"Fahaw!" cried Cecil, impatiently, "do you think me a fool? Do you think I can't guess at the doings that pollute such a place as that? At any rate, do you think I am justified in letting Redgrave remain ignorant that the woman he dates on frequent such haunts, and at such hours? Mildred, the truth must out—I care not what may be the cost, but Redgrave shall be warned."

"Not by you," she said, fiercely.

"By me," he cried.

Both rose as they spoke.

"If I suffer you to quit this place alive—" said the woman.

"I go at once to Redgrave."

"You are determined? You have weighed the consequences, and are resolved on this fool's errand?"

"I am."

"Go then," cried the donna, stepping aside and pointing to the door. "Go. But before you go, there is one fact that should be made known to you. You have dared me. You have determined to risk the worst that I can say or do; but, with all the recklessness of youth, you must have some prudence, some consideration for yourself and those about you."

"And what then?"

"Simply this. Go—do your worst—save your friend—expose me—but do not go unwarned. In the midst of your chivalric ardour, recall to yourself what I am going to say. At every step, bear in mind these words: 'He lives! he is in England!'"

"Lives! In England!"

Cecil Ingarstone uttered the words with a face that was white with horror, and reeling, sank into a chair beside him.

"You do not go!" taunted the donna.

He did not answer. He had not the power.

The room in which they sat was surging round and round.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GATHERING GLOOM.

Like the sad, presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak.

Marlow.

For four long days Dora Redgrave remained in a state of inexpressible alarm and despair, waiting the return of Cecil Ingarstone, waiting for the handsome face and the well-turned figure which during all that time never came.

Her condition was pitiable.

The consciousness that she had sent him on a dangerous errand—that but for her he would never have gone forth that night, and never exposed himself to danger, weighed upon her to an extent that was all but insupportable.

Day and night she remained in a state of nervous torpidity.

She could not eat or sleep, and performed her daily round of duties like one in a dream.

Lady de Redgrave noticed how pale and wearied she looked, and how heavily her eyelids drooped, as if from perpetual weeping; and her ladyship questioned her as to the cause.

What could she reply?

It was useless to oppress the invalid with her fears and apprehensions. Besides, what a world of trouble it would have opened up, for it would have been necessary to explain all her vague fears and ungrounded suspicions of Donna Ximena, and to have brought Ormond and his mother at issue on that point. And with what probable good result? None—clearly none. The mere capricious fancies of a loving sister were not likely to weigh much with the infatuated brother. As to his mother's wishes, it was a case in which she would hardly venture to express any; and if she did, there was no chance of their producing much effect.

Sometimes Dora thought she would confess to Ormond what her sisterly care for him had prompted her to do, and what had been the result.

But she shrank from this.

"He will resent my interference," she argued, "and in his anger he will be unjust to Cecil. He will call him a spy. That name from his lips would kill me."

As the time wore on, Dora's changed aspect attracted even her brother's attention.

"Dora," he said one day, as he caught the reflection of her face in a glass at which he was putting on his hat, "you are very pale, you're not well."

"Quite well, thank you," she replied.

"You're worried then—annoyed—something's the matter? Now I think of it, what's become of Ingarstone?"

"I was going to ask you. You've not met him?"

"No!"

"Not seen him about?"

"Not since the other night, when I left him playing chess with you."

"He knows something of Donna Ximena—he has not visited there?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"But you would have known it if he had been there?"

"I think so. Certainly."

"He may have been recalled to Ingarstone suddenly," Dora remarked, giving expression to a forlorn hope which had no real existence in her troubled and agitated breast.

Ormond looked grave, and a few moments passed before he replied. Then he said, in his haughty manner:

"Whatever the urgency, it would not have justified him in leaving you, Dora, in this abrupt manner. His attentions to you have been marked—so marked, that any act of neglect or discourtesy compromises you. He may be a lord, and may presume on his title; but he must be taught that he confers no honour on a Redgrave by his attentions. Our family is older than his; and he will find that, while I am jealous of its claims, I also know how to vindicate them."

"Dear Ormond!" cried the gentle Dora, in alarm, "You will not condemn him unheard?"

He put his hands upon her sunny head, and, bending, kissed the white brow that was raised to his. That was his answer; and having given it, he hastened to keep an appointment with the Donna Ximena.

Two days longer poor Dora dragged on a weary existence, tortured with anxiety and apprehension—feeling that to remain inactive was criminal, yet at a loss in what direction to bestir herself. On the evening of the second day, she had worked herself into such a feverish state that she half resolved to go to the donna, to fall at her feet, confess what had happened, and implore her to give some clue to her lover's fate.

She was yet hesitating over this course, when the door opened, and Cecil Ingarstone himself appeared at the threshold.

With a cry of delight, Dora sprang toward him.

"Cecil!" she cried, with hysterical vehemence.

He murmured some half-audible sound, and caught her in his arms.

"You are ill?" cried Dora, looking up into his face with a shudder; "are you suffering?"

"No, no. A little weak, nothing more."

But his appearance terribly belied his words. He was hollow and emaciated. The light seemed to have died from his eyes, and the bloom had vanished from his cheeks, which were sunken and hollow. He appeared feverish and thin, and was scarcely able to support the burden of his fragile form.

This change, however, bad as it was—and he seemed to have taken ten years upon his shoulders—did not alarm her so much as a peculiar expression which rested upon his face—a certain shadow, if it might be so described, of which Dora had never perceived traces before.

It was not care—terror—wildness; but seemed made up of all three.

Such a look might have been habitual to a man living in the shadow of some secret crime, or apprehensive of some terrible retribution.

"Tell me, for heaven's sake," cried Dora, leading him to a seat, "what has happened to you? Why have you doomed me to this agonizing suspense?"

"The truth is soon told, darling," replied Cecil; "I did your bidding; I followed and watched, as you wished me."

"And you satisfied yourself—"

"Of nothing, nothing," he interposed, vehemently. "The time was wasted, so far. I made no discovery—none."

She was surprised at the earnestness with which he said this; but, unable to account for it, simply asked:

"You followed Donna Ximena?"

"A little way—yes."

"And what then?"

"I lost her. I lost myself. I strayed into a low neighbourhood, was attacked, half-murdered, left for dead. It was by a miracle that I was rescued—taken to a strange house—nursed—brought to my senses—and rendered capable of coming here."

Between her delight at seeing him and her horror at the perils he had escaped, Dora asked innumerable

questions, but learned little more in the way of particulars. The tale he had told her he adhered to, and the insensibility which had followed the murderous attack upon his life became an excuse both for shortcomings and discrepancies in the narrative.

Strangely enough, not a word escaped his lips as to that which had really occurred that night. Not a word of the gaming house, or of Donna Ximena's strange banker's. Not a word either of his having been taken to the dark beauty's house, or of what had passed there.

Was he fearful of exciting jealous feelings in Dora's breast?

That could hardly be.

Did he reserve all he had to say on that topic for Ormond Redgrave's ear—for the private ear of the friend whom he had felt bound in honour to warn, to enlighten, and to save?

If so, it was strange that when they met at night, as they did, and when Ormond demanded, not without dignity, to know the cause of his abrupt disappearance, he simply repeated the story of the murderous attack and its effects. Not a word of Donna Ximena. Not a syllable of caution or advice. No effort whatever to save the friend whom he was bound in honour to protect from the vortex which yawned beneath his feet!

When Donna Ximena's name was mentioned, it was Ormond who brought it up.

"He should not see her to-morrow," he said.

"Indeed!"

"She would be engaged. Had some relation or intimate friend come from abroad unexpectedly."

Cecil Ingarstone's teeth chattered, his knees knocked together as he sat. Her words—"He lives! he is in England!" rang in his ears, as if uttered by mocking goblins.

"But by way of compensation," Ormond went on, "they should have the pleasure of her company for a few days down at Ingarstone, if it was agreeable."

"Down at Ingarstone?" Cecil gasped.

"Yes. She had expressed a desire to be present during the trials of Holt and Nolan, which were coming on, and he had promised to drop a note to Lord Ingarstone, asking him to extend his invitation to her as a friend of his (Redgrave's)."

Cecil Ingarstone listened with astonishment and trepidation.

"He had no doubt," he murmured, with his habitual politeness, but hardly knowing what he said, "that his father would be happy to extend his hospitality to any friend of the family. It was unnecessary that Ormond should write. He would be returning home that day, and would communicate with him."

Dora, in her loving alarm for him, protested against his travelling in his weak, emaciated state. But he persisted in it. He declared, with some approach to his light, airy manner, that he was getting strong and hearty; that he was quite equal to the short journey, and must go—must go that very night.

It was useless to oppose him.

Ormond, proud, dignified, but self-absorbed, added his wishes to those of his sister, expressing the pleasure he should have in his friend's society; but it was of no avail.

To Ingarstone he declared he must go; and after an hour or two spent in a state of agitation which even Dora's presence did not serve to calm, he set off by rail for the family home.

Directly he had taken his seat in the railway carriage—it was a first-class compartment, and he was alone in it—he drew up the windows, and burst into tears.

"What a weak fool I am!" he exclaimed. "This blow—this illness has utterly unmanned me. Yet here is real danger, too. Here is something that it might try a man's nerves to face. How do I know what this proud, implacable woman may dare? At present, she only stipulates that I should be quiet; that I should, in fact, become her accomplice, and see my friend swept on to destruction without raising the feeblest cry of warning. But she may go beyond this. She may be compelled to do it. And then what becomes of Ingarstone?"

In his weak, tremulous state, the question seemed to shake him like an aspen.

"What becomes of Ingarstone?" he repeated.

"And Dora, my beautiful Dora, dare I even think of her?"

He had not finished these reflections when he reached his journey's end—the little station at Ingarstone, which ordinary travellers so resented the train being stopped at, wondering what upon earth a station was wanted at that out-of-the-way place for, and conjecturing, rightly enough, that "some swell's influence had secured it."

The "swell" in question, Lord Ingarstone himself, happened to be at the station, and his surprise at seeing his son alight was only equalled by his dismay at perceiving what a wreck he presented.

"Gad, Cecil!" he exclaimed, "you are a mere ghost—mere ghost, by Jove! Something happened?"

The son took the father's arm, and they walked off together toward the family mansion.

On the way, Cecil hastily told as much of his midnight adventure as he chose to impart, and then plunged into the deeper and more important matter which was preying upon his mind.

He repeated the words which Donna Ximena had used to him at her own house. "He lives! he is in England!" and their effect on his lordship was scarcely less powerful than they had been upon his son.

The courtly manner died out of him at once; the starch which, more or less, seemed to enter into his composition, from his still cravat downwards, all gave way. He became limp and spiritless, and hung heavily on the younger man's arm.

"Is this true, Cecil?" he asked.

"I fear so," was the answer.

"But this woman—who is she?"

"I cannot tell you."

"That is to say—you don't know?"

"Whatever I know or do not know is beside the question. I can only answer as I have answered—I cannot tell you."

"By Gad, sir, this is strange language to me, sir—to your father, sir," said Ingarstone, firing up. "Here is a matter affecting the interests of the whole family, and—monstrous idea!—you must keep your own counsel, and leave me—leave us all at a disadvantage! Deuced odd, sir; deuced unnatural, too."

"It may appear so," replied Cecil, quietly; "but I can take only one course—that which I am taking. To you this woman must remain what she represents herself to be—the descendant of an ancient Spanish family, born in England. Our safety lies in your acknowledging that rank, and not appearing to suspect her right to it. I know that in this I am playing—and leading you to play—a contemptible, an unworthy part; but what can I do? We must conciliate this woman, or take the consequences."

"And conciliation or no conciliation, won't the consequences force themselves upon us?" asked his lordship.

"They may. I hope not. I have her promise, and I hope not."

Ingarstone seemed to have no such hope: he was altogether filled with apprehensions, and such was their visible effect upon him, that when the butler admitted them, on their reaching Ingarstone, the man fairly started.

The master who had returned was but the ghost of the master who had gone out that morning.

Father and son spent half the night in close conference, and among the letters in the letter-bag in the morning was one addressed to Donna Ximena de Cordova, presenting Lord Ingarstone's compliments to that lady, and praying that she would do him the honour of accepting the hospitality of Ingarstone during the forthcoming assize week.

CHAPTER XXVIII. THE EVE OF THE ASSIZES.

What was her terror,
Whence was her fear?
Never the tale of it
Mortal might hear.

Ballad.

THE week of the assizes rapidly came round.

Intense interest attached to it, for the calendar was a very heavy one; but the chief feature in it was the charge of murder against Andrew Nolan and Timothy Holt.

Public feeling ran very high in this instance.

There was immense diversity in the conclusions people arrived at. As a rule, Nolan, who inspired the chief interest, was acquitted as a principal, but condemned as an accomplice. As to Holt, nobody had any doubt of his guilt. Everything had gone against him from the first, and his mother's accusation was conclusive. With a bad character, bad antecedents, strong motive to the crime, and strong circumstantial evidence of having committed it, the prospect left him was of the blackest and most desponding character. In popular estimation he was as good as tried, convicted, and swung up out of the way. "And a good job too," people added by way of comment, so little of sympathy or compassion did Radical Holt inspire even among people of his own class.

Beatrice Ingarstone looked forward to the trial with the deepest anxiety.

Her share in the events, which had been so strangely brought about, had been a very painful one, and it began to be whispered—this was during the week that Ormond Redgrave was away—that it was telling upon her health. She did look pale, wild eyed, haggard, and far from well, and every night aggravated these symptoms.

Those nights were not passed in rest.

The light in her chamber burned on into the chill dawn, and Crofts, who occupied an adjoining chamber of her own, within hearing, set it about that her mis-

tress seldom did more than throw herself on the bed, and spent the greater part of the night in pacing the room, talking and moaning to herself.

The girl attributed this to intense anxiety.

She was right; but the coming trial and the fate of Nolan did not bring it altogether about.

We have seen that Beatrice, firm in her sound principles and determination to do right, had resolved to act with perfect justice toward Nolan, for whom she experienced the deepest pity,—a feeling which the poet tells us is nearly "akin to love." To Redgrave she resolved to give no more than the passing thoughts which other friends of the family might have claimed.

But, firm as her purpose was, she could not conceal her disappointment at Redgrave's abrupt departure, and at the fact that he had never written to assign any reason for it. One letter only had reached Beatrice (it was one which had, probably, escaped the vigilance of Flacker and his agents), and this contained not a word of apology. It spoke of the writer as being in good health and spirits, and as being very much occupied with the affairs of his Spanish friend, who had as yet hardly settled down into her new residence.

The mention of that Spanish friend involuntarily drove the colour from the fair girl's cheeks.

She was not jealous; she scorned the pettiness of that mean passion; but she felt that Redgrave had acted in a manner such as she could not approve, he having offered her the attentions of a lover, and then quitted her without reason or excuse, apparently for no other reason than to seek in the charms of a rival!

While this feeling was strong upon her, Cecil Ingarstone mentioned, in a careless way at dinner, that Ormond was coming down for the assize week, and that he was going to bring the donna with him.

Beatrice looked across the table at him, aghast.

"Bring her here?" she inquired.

Lord Ingarstone interposed.

"Why not, Beaty, why not?" he asked. "Redgrave's friend's always welcome. Deuced odd thing to ask him and not his guest; friend of Cecil's too."

"Is that so? Do you know her, Cecil?" asked Beatrice.

"Oh, yes. Quite well. Met her—where did I meet her? In society, years ago. Charming woman! You'll be delighted with her."

The woman's instinct told Beatrice that there was some special reason for this step. She read in the manner of the father and son signs of agreement and understanding. They were acting in concert—she saw that clearly enough—and for some well understood object.

Deeply wounded, she yet determined not to give expression to her feelings; but to shape her conduct by the rules of politeness and perfect good breeding, which are like an armour of defence to those skilled in their use, having been, apparently, designed in the outset, not so much to regulate the intercourse of friends as the meeting of enemies.

In a day or two Donna Ximena arrived.

She was superb in all her appointments.

One main object which she had in view was manifestly that of "cutting out" her rival, the Lady Beatrice; and, in order to effect this, she first had recourse to what is the most obvious weapon to vulgar minds for such a purpose, namely, overpowering dress. The donna's style was always loud and demonstrative. Her style was large, pretentious, showy, and overwhelming. On this occasion she had fairly outdone herself. She came down to Ingarstone as if she had walked straight out of the last plate of Paris fashions. Everything about her was costly, extravagant, and of the most gorgeous description.

The effect of this, in combination with her oriental style of beauty—her ample blue-black hair, her superb eyes, and swelling figure—she could fairly calculate upon.

At their very first interview Beatrice appeared at a disadvantage.

Her classic features, her slim, graceful form, shrunk into insignificance; and her attire, which, though in the best taste, had no pretension about it, appeared, by contrast, absolutely "dowdy."

"My dear," said the donna, swooping down upon her victim with flying colours, "I have heard so much of you. I am so delighted to see you!"

"You are very welcome to Ingarstone," replied Beatrice, quietly, just returning the pressure of the visitor's daintily-gloved hand.

"It is a charming place, I can see that," said the intruder; "and they have not at all over-rated you, dear. We shall get on splendidly together—not a doubt of it. Is Lord Ingarstone at home?"

His lordship happened to enter at the moment.

Perhaps it resulted from some pre-determined arrangement—perhaps from real admiration of a really fine woman—but however that might be, his lordship revived on this occasion all the gallantry of the Regency, to give effect to his greeting.



[DORA REDGRAVE'S JOY AT CECIL INGARSTONE'S REAPPEARANCE.]

Subsequently, Cecil Ingarstone endorsed the welcome.

No traces of that stormy interview at the Lodge remained.

"Had he recovered from his London misadventure?" the donna ventured to inquire, her dark eyes sparkling maliciously as she spoke.

"Quite," he replied.

"She had been so apprehensive," she said.

"There was really no occasion for alarm," he assured her.

"None?"

"Not the slightest."

"That would delight a friend of hers," she assured him—"a friend whom she had supposed to be dead, but who was alive and in England, and who would naturally have taken great interest in the matter."

Beatrice, who was looking on while this passed, half-started from her seat as the donna finished, so strange was the effect which the words seemed to produce upon her brother. He turned pale, trembled, and looked ill. But in a minute or two he appeared to recover himself.

Further conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Ormond Redgrave.

The greeting between him and the Lady Beatrice was of a nervous and unsatisfactory nature.

Beatrice was quiet with excess of feeling. Ormond, although his heart was touched by the change in her appearance, the cause of which he was at no loss to guess, was prouder and more haughty than usual. The influence of the donna was upon him—would have been, even if she had not sat there regarding him with a tiger's eyes—and he was smarting with the recollection of his unanswered letters.

Very little was said on either side.

What was said was so unimportant as quite to satisfy Donna Ximena, who sat twirling a serpent bracelet round and round her white arm, apparently a disinterested spectator.

The general conversation naturally turned upon the forthcoming week, so important in its bearing upon the interests of the Ingarstone family.

"You are acquainted with the melancholy facts of the case?" asked Beatrice of the donna.

"Perfectly," she replied. "I had them all from Redgrave, who has taken such an important part in them."

She saw that this allusion to Redgrave struck like a dagger into the bosom of her rival; but went on.

"It is a most distressing affair," she said. "What your feelings must be I can hardly realize. In fact, it is cruel to refer to the subject. At the same time,

I must say that I, for one, cannot believe Mr. Nolan guilty."

(She must greatly have changed in opinion since the day when suspicion pointed to him so strongly that, as she told Dora Redgrave, his guilt was beyond question.)

"That is now the general opinion," Beatrice answered, calmly.

"Holt is the man—unquestionably the man," said the donna, with unnecessary warmth.

"The circumstantial evidence is very strong against him," remarked Cecil, who sat by.

"Circumstantial! It goes beyond that. It is evidence. It's as much evidence as anything can be—anything that is connected with a crime committed in secret. I haven't patience with the namby-pamby sentimentalism of the present day, that is afraid to bring home crime to anybody, and leaves such loopholes for escape that the darkest criminals are let loose to prey upon society. They call it justice. I call it folly."

She was so very irate, so warm and impressive, that the listeners gazed at her with amazement.

"It is right that the wicked should suffer," said Beatrice; "but it would be very dreadful if an innocent man should wrongly pay the forfeit of his life!"

"As many have done!" said Cecil.

"Not so many as you imagine!" exclaimed the donna. "That is one of the fictions of this sentimental age. Here and there, in the long course of history, a desperate character has suffered for a crime he did not commit, instead of expiating those he has been guilty of."

"But this man Holt—"

"Radical Holt!" she interposed, with asperity.

"Yes; they call him so," said Beatrice—"is not so terrible a criminal—"

"What then?" demanded the fierce woman. "Who can tell where the contamination even of a man like that ends? Who can say what trouble he may not cause? Nay, look what has already happened. I am sure my heart bled when I heard of that terrible incident in your drawing-room; and Redgrave, strange as he is, deeply sympathized with you in respect of Mr. Nolan, who is no doubt innocent as the child unborn."

"Mr. Redgrave is very kind," said Beatrice, cut to the heart by the way in which reference was made to his sympathy. "But even the pain and inconvenience which Mr. Nolan and those about him have suffered, would not justify the conviction of an innocent man, whatever his demerits."

Donna Ximena threw herself back in her chair, and was about to reply, when a servant in livery entered, and desired to speak to Lady Beatrice.

"It's nothing private, my lady," he said, glancing at the company.

"Speak, then," she said.

"It's only a messenger from down in the enclose—from the gipsies there," returned the servant. Donna Ximena sat upright in her chair.

"One of them is dying."

"Well?" said Beatrice.

"The one they call their queen—the old, old woman who was here some months ago," said the domestic.

"She dying?" said Beatrice, with great concern.

"Impossible!" cried Donna Ximena.

"What! You know her?"

"As all know her. She is notorious," replied the haughty woman, in a voice little above a whisper.

"And she desires to see me?" asked Beatrice, addressing the servant.

"Yes, my lady. She's sent a special messenger. She says it's a matter that concerns you deeply."

"I will go to her at once," replied Beatrice. "Order the carriage round."

The man bowed, and disappeared.

As he did so, Donna Ximena rose, and took both the fair girl's hands in hers. Her rich olive complexion had faded to an unwholesome green. Her forehead was wet with dew. Her lips moved with a convulsive twitching.

"You won't go?" she said. "You won't be so mad? These people die off, like sheep, with hideous fevers, brought on by their way of life. Their diseases are peculiar and contagious. Mark me—contagious. You won't expose yourself to the danger? You must not. The message is merely a ruse to extort charity. Nothing more, depend on it. And you will be duped, and run a danger that you little dream of. You must not go!"

"I have promised," said Beatrice, calmly, but firmly.

"My lord, will you permit this? And you, Redgrave, have you nothing to say?"

The door opened.

"The carriage, my lady," said the attendant.

Beatrice moved toward the door.

"You shall not go!" shrieked Donna Ximena.

"At least," she added, perceiving the general astonishment at her strange and inexplicable conduct, "not unattended. I will go with you!"

And she followed Beatrice from the room.

(To be continued.)



[THE COUNT DE CANNES SURPRISES DR. NARVAEZ IN HIS DISSECTING-ROOM.]

THE BONDAGE OF BRANDON.

CHAPTER LXII.

I have now
No altar but thy knee to which to fly.
I have no friend but thee. If thou shalt dare
Stretch forth thy hand to aid me, I shall find
Safety. If not, then I am lost indeed.
Potter's "Euripides."

Was it the trickling of water which struck a chill to the count's heart, or was it the fanciful creation of an over-heated imagination?

There could be no doubt as to the existence of a terrible chasm within a few inches of him, and he more than feared that the ingenuity of the monks of the Inquisition at Madre de Dios had, in times gone by, invented a rushing cascade, low down in the bowels of the earth, and beneath the foundation of the building, for the rapidly gliding waters to obliterate the evidences of any deed of cruelty or darkness.

Wiping the damp from his forehead, he extended his hand with great care. It touched nothing. All was solid. Further—further—still further. Ah! that is solid masonry again. His hand rests upon the opposite side of the pit-fall, which is not of great width, and may be easily avoided by a light spring.

The count rose to his feet, but he trembled violently all over. His narrow escape had unmanned him. Leaning the whole weight of his body against the wall, he extended his right foot, but did not set it down until he felt the brick-work again, then drawing his body up, he inclined it forward, and stood on the opposite side of the gulf.

By a miracle he had escaped an awful danger. Without loss of time he continued his journey, but he did so with the utmost cautiousness, because he dreaded some new peril. At length the passage terminated, and his advanced foot struck against an iron-bound door. After groping in the darkness for half a minute or so, he discovered the handle, which he turned. The door yielded to his pressure, and a sudden flood of light almost blinded him; he was in a vaulted apartment, which was illuminated by half a dozen oil lamps backed with burnished reflectors. The lamps stood on brackets in different parts of the chamber, and were disposed advantageously. At one end there was a chair and a table; upon the latter were placed pens, ink, and paper.

In various places the count saw strange pieces of mechanism, the like of which he never remembered

having seen before. He could attach no use, no signification, no meaning to them.

There was no person in the room into which he had intruded, as he could perceive at a glance; so, actuated by a curious impulse, which he found it impossible to resist, the count, taking a lamp down from one of the brackets on the wall, held it in his hand, and began his investigation; he soon satisfied himself that he had wandered into what was, doubtless, the judgment chamber of the convent.

The count did not find the locality a pleasant one, nor the reflections which it suggested congenial to his nature, so he looked about him for some means of egress. As he was thus occupied, the sound of approaching footsteps and voices fell upon his ears.

Seeing no door through which he could make his escape, he thought the most prudent thing he could do would be to retire within the passage from which he had just emerged.

He did so.

Scarcely had he shut the door, with as much gentleness as possible, when several persons entered the vaulted apartment.

The count was unable to hear what they said, owing to the thickness of the door behind which he was sheltered, but he guessed that they were priests. He, therefore, listened intently.

Some time passed, during which he heard nothing but smothered voices. Suddenly the tones of a woman's voice arose, pleading aloud for mercy, and producing a thousand echoes in the vaulted chamber, reached his ears. His pulse grew feeble, his respiration difficult; his blood curdled, for he should know those pleading tones which read his heart.

It is his wife!

His wife! God help her! He remembered how ruthlessly she had been torn from him; and he now bitterly regretted his tameness in suffering his poor, ill-used, long-suffering wife to be forced from him.

Why did he not break away from the abbess, and dart after the priests when they were dragging the struggling Sister Inez to the secret passage? By striking right and left, she would, probably, have been free.

One consideration alone restrained him. He was in the lion's den. His chance of escaping from the convent would have been small; and his futile efforts at ultimate release would not have saved his wife, but only have involved them both in one common ruin.

Long years ago he had driven his wife from his door with contumely and insult, for he was labouring under a misconception, and believed that she had dis-

honoured his name. She went away for ever. Her pride would not allow her to return to the arms of a man who could doubt her honour, or question the integrity of her mind and character.

With a sorrow laden heart, and overburdened with suffering, she took the veil, and, losing her identity, became Sister Inez. Lost to the world, she never expected to see her husband again; and she found peace within the walls of the convent.

But her husband had meanwhile established her innocence, and sought far and near, without finding her. In his desperation, and urged on by the remorse of his heart, he led an adventurous life, and gave himself up to a bad and vicious course, until he became what he was when Sir Lawrence Allingford made his acquaintance—a roud, a gambler, a robber, and a detaachee.

Again that pleading voice!

All the blood in the count's veins boils with furious indignation; and regardless of consequences, he turns the handle of the door, pushes it open, and stands once more in the glare of the lamps of the judgment chamber!

Sister Inez was there revealed to him, bound and a prisoner. A priest, wearing rich robes, was seated at a table on which writing materials were displayed, and held a pen poised in his hand, as if waiting to take down any confession which might be volunteered by the unhappy woman, or extracted from her by the terror of her position. Another priest stood by the side of Sister Inez, ready to catch any half-uttered, faintly gasped revelation that might escape her, and transmit it to his superior, while two others stood behind her.

For an instant the Count de Cannes stood irresolutely upon the stone floor of the apartment into which he had rashly intruded, but only for an instant.

When his uncertainty vanished, he strode resolutely up to the priest who was sitting at the writing table, and calling his best Spanish to his assistance, exclaimed:

"Liberate your prisoner!"

The priests, utterly astounded at the unexpected appearance of the Count de Cannes, looked up in amazement; but the superior, who was evidently a man possessing cool audacity and consummate assurance, replied:

"By what authority do you interfere?"

"By the authority of a husband."

"That is not an authority recognized here," replied the priest slowly, but with solemnity.

"It is one which I will compel you to respect and recognize," vociferated the Count de Cannes.

"I question your ability," said the superior; "and,

if you will take advice, which is friendly in its nature, you will retire as you came."

"Release your prisoner!" shouted the count, who now that he had committed himself to a decided course of action, did not hesitate to carry it out to the letter.

"I have not the power to do so."

"Send these men away, or else I shall do them an injury."

"Again I doubt your ability, although I do not question your inclination," said the superior, in the same even and unvarying tone he had employed throughout the altercation.

The Count de Cannes was a wiry, muscular man; and, although he had not been called upon often during his life to use the weapons with which nature endows every one, he did not evince any repugnance to a contest with the ecclesiastic.

"I ask you once more," he said, turning to the superior, "will you do as I request you?"

"I am unable to do so."

"You will not?"

"I have not the power."

"That is your final answer?"

"It is."

Swiftly the count darted forward and struck the man who was standing by Sister Inez to the ground. He fell with a crash upon the pavement, and lay still and motionless from a fracture of the skull.

The other two, side by side, awaited the count of the count.

They were brawny, thick-set men, and formidable antagonists; but De Cannes attacked them without hesitation. For some time the fierce battle waged with varying fortune. In spite of the numerical superiority of his opponents, the count seemed, from his skill and science, to have the best of the encounter; but the superior's cunning rendered all his efforts abortive.

Leaving his seat, he stole behind the count and seized his arms before he was aware of what was taking place in his rear.

The others now rushed upon the defenceless man, and speedily bore him to the ground. In the space of two minutes he was as helpless as his wife, and completely in the power of his vanquishers.

He fumed and fretted, but all to no purpose. Cords were attached to his hands and feet, and he was securely bound. With a few kicks and blows, they threw him into a corner.

He gnashed his teeth with impotent fury, and his curses and imprecations were both loud and deep. He blamed his folly and his rashness, now that he was conquered, for embarking in a struggle the issue of which was never for a moment doubtful. He might have known that he had no chance when pitted against the power of four muscular opponents. What was one unarmed man against four, or forty, had the exigencies of the occasion necessitated sending for reinforcements?

Sister Inez was, apparently, beyond their power, for she had lapsed into a state of insensibility.

But a sign from the presiding priest commanded the executors of his will to apply restoratives to the fainting woman. They dipped a sponge in vinegar, and bathed her face with it, whilst they applied some to her nostrils.

After a time, their efforts at restoration were successful. Sister Inez opened her eyes and looked wildly about her.

"Do you confess?" asked the priest by her side.

"What?" she said, in a low, quivering tone.

"That the man who claims you as his wife is a spy."

"He is my husband."

"You refuse to confess?"

"I have nothing to tell you."

"You are obstinate."

"What do you want me to say?"

"The truth."

"You have heard it?"

With this reply upon her lips, Sister Inez again became insensible; and by the direction of the superior, the assistants raised her, and placed her upon a bundle of straw spread out against the wall. Upon this rude couch they laid her and left her.

The priest who was in charge of the party folded up his papers, and walking up to the Count de Cannes, with a stern expression upon his countenance, exclaimed:

"You have dared to attack the servants of the Church. Rest assured your punishment will not be one whit less sure because it is slow."

"What have I done?" asked the count, sullenly.

"You have committed a great crime."

"In attempting to rescue my wife?"

"With your motives we have nothing to do."

"What are your intentions respecting me?"

"You will know in due time. At present you will remain where you are. Hunger and thirst will, no doubt, reduce you to a state of humility, and render

you less like a wild beast than you were a short time ago."

"I warn you to be careful how you ill-treat me!" exclaimed the count, menacingly.

"You have exposed yourself to just punishment," replied the priest.

"There is a British consul at Madre de Dios."

"He has doubtless something else to think of than attending to the baseless complaints of sacrilegious heretics like you."

"I will make a terrible example of you."

"We fear no one," said the priest, grandly.

"At least, pay some attention to my poor wife!"

pleaded De Cannes. "She is in a state of unconsciousness. You might, at least, have a little merciful consideration for her, if you treat me with insult and neglect."

"She will be attended to in good time."

The priest turned from the count, and putting himself at the head of his little band, walked with a stately tread from the room.

The Count de Cannes was alone with his wife. Sister Inez was oblivious of all that was passing around her.

Half-an-hour elapsed, during which De Cannes was left to his meditations, which were not of the most agreeable nature.

If he had not allied himself to Sir Lawrence Allingford, and sought the destruction of Lady Brandon, he would have been safe and sound, instead of languishing as a prisoner in a subterranean cell.

Lady Brandon possessed the properties of the upper tier; she lighted all who came in contact with her—both enemies and friends.

Sir Lawrence Allingford was dead, and the Count de Cannes was in a fair way to end his days in a dungeon.

His reflections were very bitter; and he wished that he had never undertaken the journey from Gibraltar to Cadiz, which occasioned his disastrous stoppage at Madre de Dios.

CHAPTER LXIII.

But terrible move in thee a horrid joy,
And thou art hardened by habitual danger.

Bend thy steely sinews, bend and pray;
The curse of him thou'st murdered lies within.

Maturin.

THE cause of the affability and condescension of the abbess to Lady Brandon and her husband, arose from the fact of her having received a magnificent present from Lady Brandon, in the shape of a diamond bracelet, worth I don't know how many thousand reals, if converted into money. This would swell the pride of the abbess, and increase the revenue of the convent, and be a something to fall back upon when times were hard, and the hand of power fell heavily upon the sisters of La Cypria.

Having conducted her children, as she called them, into a private apartment, the abbess left them, promising to send something to eat to them in the course of an hour.

The room was poorly but substantially furnished. Pictures of saints and crucifixes abounded, and there was an altar in a deep embrasure between two windows at which any one could fall down and engage in prayer.

Upon the table stood a quaintly carved wooden bottle, filled with rich, luscious Spanish wine.

"Reginald, come hew and speak to me," exclaimed Lady Brandon to her husband, who hung behind, and took up his position near the door, as if he contemplated a retreat, but did not know how to effect it.

"I would rather stay where I am," he replied.

"As you please. Some day you will be sorry for the way in which you treat me."

"Indeed!" he said, with a bitter, hollow sounding laugh.

"The scales will fall from your eyes in time. At present I can see you hate me."

"You are unworthy of my love."

"Why?" she asked, as if she were the most innocent woman in the world.

"Have you not deprived a fellow creature of life?"

He waited, expecting an indignant denial; but Lady Brandon contented herself with saying, "Complete your string of accusations, and then I will answer you."

"So be it," he replied; "although it is all so clear to me that—"

"How can it be clear to you," she interrupted, "and what is clear?"

He quailed a little beneath her fiery glance.

"I will tell you what is clear," she continued, "that you are a dolt and an idiot."

"For what reason?"

"For paying any attention to the delirious ravings of a man who knew not what he was saying."

"He did not rave," said Reginald Welby, with a solemn shake of the head.

"I say he did."

"And at the risk of contradicting you, I assert that there was little of the madman about him."

"Who but you," said her ladyship, with an intonation of supreme contempt, "would place any faith or reliance in such an improbable story as the one you have heard?"

"It is enough that I believe it," he replied.

Welby was becoming bold.

"You wish me to understand that your affections are alienated from me," she exclaimed, with a searching glance.

"I did not say that."

"That is an evasive answer."

"You have no right to draw such an inference from what I have uttered."

"Give me a straightforward response."

"I have done so."

"It is not sufficiently plain for me."

"What is it you want?" asked Reginald.

"Yes or no. Do you love me, or do you not?"

"I can never come to love you."

"Never?"

"As long as I live I shall love you," he said, with a deep sigh.

"As of old?"

"Perhaps more wildly. That is my misfortune."

"Ah! I doubt your sincerity," she said, with a seductive look.

"Nevertheless, it is the truth. You may break my heart, but you cannot destroy my love until you kill me."

"How can you reconcile your profession of love with your rude, unfeeling speeches?"

"If I am rude and unfeeling—"

"If?"

"It is because you have forfeited my confidence."

"It seems to me, Reginald," said Lady Brandon, earnestly, "that you wish to bring about a separation."

"A separation!"

"Yes. Is it not so?"

He looked aghast. This contingency did not seem to have occurred to him; and yet, by taking the high and dignified course he had done, he should have known that his difference with his wife could end in nothing else.

"Why should we separate?"

"Oh!" said Lady Blanche, disdainfully, "you ask me why?"

"I do."

"You accuse me of being a murderess; and yet, while you condemn me and taunt me with my imaginary crime, you are willing that I should still bear your name and be your wife."

There was a pause.

"If you wish to leave me, do so," she continued; "there is nothing to prevent you. I am better of than you yourself, and there is no difficulty of a pecuniary nature which can arise in your mind. Go back to England."

"Never!"

"Oh, yes! go back to—shire; you will doubtless be well received there."

"Never, I tell you!"

"What! Do you not wish to see your sister and your family?"

"Do not talk of them!" he said, in a husky voice, as he thought how his happiness had been wrecked.

"Why not? They are not a tabooed subject. There is no ban upon them, and therefore I shall speak of them."

"Blanche!" he said, pleadingly.

She was recovering her serenity now, and was determined to be revenged upon her weak-minded, good-natured husband, whose instinct always told him what was right, but whose will and strength of moral purpose were not sufficiently strong to enable him to act as his conscience dictated. She wished for revenge, because he had dared to think for himself, and hint at the course of action which, as a right-minded man, he should have adopted.

"There is some one else," she said, "whom I have no doubt you would experience great pleasure in seeing."

"Who is that?"

"It is very charming to affect innocence, is it not?"

"Who do you mean?"

"You know perfectly well that I mean Miss Zedfern."

"How ridiculous!" he said, with a gesture of annoyance.

"I do not think so. You are probably desirous of returning to England to congratulate her on her power of prophecy."

"She is nothing to me. I do not like Miss Zedfern."

"Nor I. But you would, perhaps, like to tell her

that you regret not having acted upon her advice, and that you have lost no time in rectifying your mistake by shaking off your matrimonial shackles upon the slenderest and shallowest pretence."

"Oh, Blanche!" cried Reginald, approaching his wife, and speaking in a heart-broken voice; "I wish for nothing now but—but—"

"Well! Speak out. However terrible the object of your ambition may be, it will not affect my nervous organisation," she said, in a bantering tone.

"But death!" he replied, with so mournful a cadence that even Blanche was struck by it.

"According to your account of the stories you have heard, I am the proper person to apply to for a receipt such as you are in search of," she answered, in the same jocular strain.

"Do not talk like that! I cannot bear it!"

"I am afraid your education is very imperfect. You must learn to bear it. There are many disagreeable things that people are compelled to listen to. For instance, what have you been saying to me?"

"What I believed to be true."

"And what, I tell you, is pure fiction, of the flimsiest description."

"My informant was a dying man."

"All the more reason that his mind should be wandering."

"But it was not," said Reginald, resolutely.

"How can you venture to say that? You are not a surgeon—you have no medical knowledge."

Reginald shook his head.

"Come, now," she added. "What did he say?"

"I have already told you."

"I wish to hear it again. I was a murderer, was I not?"

"Yes."

"On two occasions?"

"Yes."

"Once I killed my sister-in-law, and once his friend, Sir Lawrence Allingford?"

"That is, in effect, what he said," replied Reginald, who felt so intensely miserable, that he would willingly have shirked a reopening of the subject, but the determination of his wife would not allow him to avoid it.

"Was I not also a kidnapper?"

"You were."

"And you are silly and credulous enough to believe such dire nonsense?" she exclaimed, with a laugh.

He made no reply.

"One would think you were a boy fresh from the nursery, with an imagination fostered by tales of absurd giant-killers and impossible bean-stalks!"

He hung down his head; he was but a reed shaken by the wind when Lady Brandon took him in hand and spoke earnestly to him.

"We will not talk about such trash any longer, Reginald," she continued. "If you are weak-minded enough to pin your faith to it, you must please yourself; I have done all I can to disabuse you of it, and I do not feel inclined to continue my exertions. In plain language, I can do no more: you must take your course."

"What am I to do?" murmured Reginald, who was nearly distracted with conflicting emotions.

"Act like a man, Reginald!" exclaimed Lady Brandon. "Act up to the dictates of your conscience!"

"In what way?" he asked, timidly.

"If you believe me guilty, leave me!"

"Leave you?"

"Yes; at once. This very moment. There must be no hesitation about it."

"You are hasty."

"Not at all. I am simply decided."

"Do not be rash, Blanche," he said, wishing to gain time, for his mind was a perfect wilderness of inchoate ideas.

"Rash! Oh, no; do not fear that. I repeat what I said just now: leave me. Never mind my being in a foreign land: I dare say I shall be able to find my way home again."

"You drive me from you."

"Reginald!" she exclaimed, in a stern voice, "if you do not wish to render yourself utterly contemptible in my eyes, you will leave me, and leave me at once. Let the commingling of the currents of our lives end here. Go your way, and let me go mine."

Lady Brandon knew that her only chance of success with her husband was to talk in the way in which she was talking.

Had she gone to him with a cringing gait, and in a supplicating voice begged his forgiveness, she would have broken the spell by which she exercised such great influence over him, and did just as she pleased with him.

Lady Brandon bend her knee or bow her head! She had never yet done so to any living being; and her nature was too obstinate and stubborn to allow her to begin now.

Reginald Welby took a few steps towards the door, and then stood irresolute in the middle of the room.

Lady Brandon turned her head away from him. She knew him much better than he knew himself.

"I cannot leave you!" he exclaimed, with a cry of anguish.

"You say that," she replied, "as if you regretted the fact."

"I could not leave you if you were ten thousand times worse than your enemies represented you."

"Oh, you are sure of that?" she said, sarcastically.

"God knows I have tried to be resolute, but your power of fascination over me is invincible."

"There is no doubt, in your own mind, that you cannot leave me?"

"Oh, no! none at all. I would rather die. To leave you would be equivalent to receiving my death-blow from my own hand," he replied.

"I am very much obliged to you for your kindness, I am sure," said her ladyship, with concentrated sarcasm.

"You have nothing to thank me for."

"Why not?"

"I cannot help my nature."

"Nor can I help mine. I will tell you something now."

He looked at her inquiringly.

"You have vilified me, threatened me, and cajoled me," she began.

"Forget it."

"I could not, if I were to try my hardest, Reginald—"

"You must make allowances for me."

"I shall not trouble myself to do anything of the sort. You have insulted me in every way, and trampled upon my feelings. I come of a stock rather quick to take offence; and now I know you so thoroughly, I have only one passage in my life to regret, and that is—having united myself to you in marriage. But, as the deed was of my own doing, I suppose I must be content to bear my load of misery. One thing, however, I am determined I will not do."

"And that is——" he asked, eagerly.

"You shall hear. Although you are my husband, and I have sworn to be obedient to you, I consider myself absolved from all my vows by the way in which you have treated me."

"What do you mean, Blanche?" queried Reginald, while his heart sank within him.

"I mean that if you have not sufficient courage and resolution to leave me, I have more than enough to leave you."

"Are you in earnest, Blanche?"

"Let my acts speak for me."

"What have I done to deserve such harshness?"

"Oh, Reginald!" she exclaimed, "how can you ask me what you have done? The horrible accusations you have hurled against me would have killed any woman but myself. Fortunately, I am made of sterner stuff than the generality of women."

"I only repeated what I have been told," he replied, in an explanatory tone.

"You had no business to listen to such titillation. If you had not sufficient confidence in me——"

"God knows I had!"

"Yes; but, by your own admission, that is over. All shall be over soon."

"All?"

"Good-bye, Reginald. Let me press your hand once more before I leave you for ever."

He stood as one panic-stricken by some marvellous phenomenon. His arms hung helplessly by his side; but she seized one of his hands, and pressed it warmly.

"Good-bye—a long good-bye," she repeated. "I could have wished a different and a happier termination to our wedded career, for your sake; for I believe you have loved me."

"Have loved you? Oh, Blanche——"

"There, there," she said, soothingly; "don't rhapsodize. It's useless now. You have allowed yourself to be led away by my enemies. As I have said, you will be sorry for it some day; but, like most people, you will not see your own folly until it is too late. I am going to leave you, Reginald, because you have done violence to my feelings, and so hurt my pride that no repentation it is in your power to make will ever atone for your cruel suspicions."

"You cannot be serious in your intention?" he said, in a dazed manner.

"Can I not? You shall see."

With a resolute step, she crossed the room, and laid her hand upon the handle of the door. With a bound, he was by her side.

"Blanche, Blanche! What are you doing?" he cried, piteously.

"I am going?" was her sedate reply.

"Oh! no, no. I cannot live without you."

"You will have to make the attempt at all events," said Lady Brandon, with a cold, hard smile.

"What can I do? What can I say to divorce you from your purpose?"

"Simply nothing."

"I do not believe you are guilty, dearest," he said, laying his hand affectionately upon her arm.

"You do not?"

"No. You would not act in so bold and independent a manner, were you the wretch Sir Lawrence Allingford wished me to believe."

Here his knowledge of mankind and human nature was sadly at fault.

"Your repentance is rather late."

"If it is made at the eleventh hour, let me hope it is not the less acceptable on that account."

"You retract all you have said against me?"

"Every word."

"I am not a murderer?"

"No, no!"

"Nor yet an abductor of children?"

"No, no, no!" he replied, vehemently.

"Your confidence in me is as great as ever?"

"Greater."

"Since you have openly atoned for your misconduct," she said, with a sweet, winning smile, the offspring of internal satisfaction at her success, "I suppose I must forgive you."

"Do you?" he asked, anxiously.

"Partly. You have alienated my love for a time, and you cannot expect it to return all at once."

"Thanks, thanks, dearest, for even that slight concession," he cried, rapturously.

"I have forgiven you for this once, Reginald," exclaimed Lady Brandon, in a warning tone; "but if ever you doubt me again, I leave you without a word, and no repentance on your part will succeed in reclaiming me. I will set you at defiance, and treat you as you deserve."

"If I over——" began Reginald; but his sentence was cut short by a knock at the door.

"Come in," said Lady Brandon, in a soft, melodious voice.

A couple of silent, sallow-complexioned women entered, dressed in the severest habit of their order, and placed a tray containing dinner upon the table. It was cooked in the Spanish fashion, and was rather more oleaginous than agreeable, for English palates are not over fond of oil, especially when it has the consistency and flavour of that used by railway trains.

Reginald Welby and his once-more dutiful wife sat down with alacrity at the board, for they were hungry.

Both of them were pleased; but they ate their dinner in silence, and scarcely a syllable passed their lips.

CHAPTER LXIV.

But he was foul, ill-favoured, and grim.
Under his eyebrows looking still askance

Spenser.

Time passed slowly with the Count de Cannes. The bonds with which he was secured cut into his flesh, and caused him a great deal of suffering, which he would have given much to have had the power of alleviating; but in his helpless position such power was denied him.

He believed that his poor wife was dead or dying; for she did not move, and not so much as a feeble man escaped her lips.

He was wondering what would become of him, and dreading some dreadful fate, when the door by which the priests had left, revolved on its hinges, and an old woman entered. She advanced with circumspection, and looked carefully around her,—to see that no one dogged her footsteps. De Cannes thought, for her head was every now and then turned over her shoulder in a nervous sort of way, as if she suspected that some one was playing the spy upon her actions.

A strange, old-fashioned, old-world-looking little woman was this, not prepossessing in appearance, for her antiquated countenance was all lines and wrinkles. She wore the same dress as the nuns, but she did not possess the appearance of an ascetic.

She walked up to Sister Inez, and, sinking on one knee, began to examine her condition. Unable to resist the impatient curiosity which was devouring him, the Count de Cannes exclaimed:

"Is she dead?"

The old woman bounded to her feet, and for the first time noticed the Count de Cannes. Toddlings over to where he lay upon the hard floor, she looked steadily at him, and uttering an unintelligible exclamation, was about to return to Sister Inez, when the count said:

"Pray answer my question."

"What is she to you?" returned the old woman, in Spanish, in which language the count had addressed her.

"She is very dear to me."

"Why?"

"Because she is my wife."

"Your wife!" echoed the old woman, in amazement.

"Santa Maria! That is odd too."

"Do you think she is mortally wounded?"

"I cannot tell yet."

"Will you release me, and allow me to do what I can for her?" asked the count, whilst his heart palpitated so violently as to seem to beat against his ribs with the force of a clock pendulum.

"I dare not do it," she replied.

"You shall run no risk, for I give you my word I will not attempt to escape. I shall die of grief if I remain here unable to render the least assistance to my wife."

"Donna Inez—for she is a lady, and I must give her her title," said the old woman, "once saved my life when I was at death's door. I would give much to aid her now in her great extremity. Do you understand medicine?"

"I do," replied the Count de Cannes, grasping at this slender chance of obtaining his liberty, as a drowning man at a straw.

"You will use your skill on her behalf?"

"Is she not my wife?"

"True!"

"The old woman approached the count, and drawing a small penknife from her girdle, severed the cords which bound the count. He was no sooner on his feet than he uttered a cry of pain. The blood had been unable to circulate freely and properly for some time, and when it darted through the veins with accelerated velocity, it caused a tingling sensation to pervade the count's body, which had produced his exclamation.

"Hush!" said the old woman, putting her finger on her lip, "make not the slightest noise. Were the priests to discover me here, it would be an evil hour for me. I beseech you to be careful."

"You need not exhort me," replied the count; "I will be cautious enough; one friend of mine has died within these walls, and I have no particular wish to leave my bones in the convent dead house."

"Was your friend a man?"

"He was."

"Ah! So I surmised. I saw them taking him upon a stretcher to the funeral vault; he will soon make the acquaintance of Doctor Narvaez."

"Doctor Narvaez! who is he?"

"They call him a great anatomist; he has written a pile of books that high"—she extended her hand two feet from the ground. "They say he is a shining light in the town of Madre de Dios, which would be a peer and insignificant place were it not for two things."

"What are they?"

"First of all, its convent."

"Yes. And after that?"

"Its Doctor Narvaez," replied the old woman, with a chuckle. "But it ill becomes me to indulge in merriment when my poor benefactress is perhaps at her last gasp. May the holy virgin avert the omen! Come hither and try your skill, señor."

The count approached, and examined his wife's condition.

During his investigation, the old woman continued speaking in a low voice:

"I have stolen here now," she exclaimed, "at terrible risk. It got whispered about that Sister Inez was in the judgment chamber, and not being a nun myself, but only employed in the kitchen as head cook to the abbess, I ventured to steal along the passage—but how do you find her?"

"I fear she is dead!" replied the Count de Cannes, who could not perceive the slightest pulsation in Sister Inez's frame.

"The cruel wretches. God forgive me for saying so! for they are the servants of Holy Mother Church, and it is deadly sin to speak against them. Oh! they are strict enough, I warrant you, at Madre de Dios."

The count's fortitude gave way in the funeral solitude of that dismal chamber.

He was unmanned; his fortitude left him, and as the bitter memories of the past came trooping into his brain, his tears fell thick and fast upon the marble countenance of his wife.

Had no fatal misconception ever arisen between them, how different their lives might have been! What is, is always so different from what might have been! With a lowly reverence, he kissed her clay-cold lips, and remained in a state of utter prostration.

The old woman, fearing that she might be detected in her errand of mercy by those who did not believe in philanthropic missions, touched him lightly on the shoulder.

"Grieving will not restore her to life," she said.

"You are right," he replied.

"Come back, and be re-bound," she said.

Her credulity was amusing. She was evidently not acquainted with the versatile talent of the enterprising Count de Cannes.

"Certainly not."

"Eh!" she cried, in amazement.

"I have the greatest possible objection to any such proceeding."

"But—"

"Excuse me, but I have no time to waste in conversation. I must make my way out of this place with as much rapidity as possible."

"Will you not be re-bound?"

"I have already replied in the negative."

"Oh!" cried the old woman, with every demonstration of profound astonishment and abused good nature, which she seemed to think had, in the present instance, been taken advantage of.

"There is one thing I should like to do," said the count, as if talking to himself; "and that is—have a last look at poor Allingford. I wonder where the dead-house the old woman speaks of is situated?"

"The dead-house, did you say?" exclaimed the old woman, who had overheard the remark.

"Yes."

"It is easily reached from here."

"How is that?"

"There is a passage from this chamber to it."

"Which is the door?"

"That to the right of you."

The count stooped down again, and imprinted a last, long-lingering kiss upon his wife's forehead. Alas for her! She was in the prime of her life, and yet had been so cruelly wrecked!

"You will not get me into trouble, if they catch you?" said the old woman.

"Not I. I will tell them that, like Samson, I burst my bonds asunder."

"But the knife! The rope is cut!"

"Be at your ease; I will not inculpate you," replied the count.

"I wish you safe out of the convent, I'm sure," she said; "but how you will do it is a mystery to me."

"Which is the way when you reach the dead-house?"

"It's such a roundabout, you'd never understand."

"What shall I do, then? Can you give me no direction?"

"Do this, and you are safe!"

"What?" eagerly demanded the count, who would have done much to escape.

"Make friends with Dr. Narvaez."

"Narvaez?"

"Yes; the anatomist I was speaking of."

"I remember."

"He is thought much of by the brethren, and the priesthood are all powerful in Madre de Dios. He saved a whole monastery from perishing once, when the malaria was about, and swept off hundreds."

"Where can I find the doctor?" asked the count.

"He will to a certainty seek the funeral vault, for a bird of prey is not surer in scenting carrion than Doctor Narvaez in finding out the advent of a dead body to his dissecting room. Hark! what was that?"

"Some one calls."

"It is for me. Adios. May you be successful."

So saying, the good natured woman ran away, with an agility surprising for one at her time of life; and the count, following her instructions, sought the door which gave ingress to the passage leading to the dead house, in which, according to the old woman's account, Sir Lawrence Allingford's corpse had been conveyed.

He found no difficulty in opening the door, which was not fastened; and he pushed on without hesitation, for the name of Dr. Narvaez was like a ray of hope in the midst of his despair.

He had traversed more than fifty yards before a faint light glimmered afar off. He hastened on, but with the utmost caution.

At length he distinguished a small, ill ventilated vault; upon a table, in the centre of which, a dead body was lying; a lamp, with a shade over it, cast its beams upon the table and upon the corpse.

By the side of the latter, an ugly, ill-shaped individual was standing. He was in the act of turning up his shirt sleeves. A further investigation showed the Count de Cannes a box of gleaming surgical instruments lying upon the table.

If the venture was to be made at all, the count thought, it had better be made at once; so, stepping boldly into the room, he exclaimed:

"Peace be with you. All that I have is yours. My life is at your service!"

This was the florid Spanish mode of greeting; and not wishing to be thought ignorant of the customs of the country in which he was, he adopted it in addressing the doctor.

The medical gentleman turned round with a slight start, and gazed with great curiosity upon the intruder.

Doctor Narvaez was not a nice man to look at. His hair was tangled and matted, as if, in the interest of science, it was seldom combed out.

His face was dirty and unwashed; and if he was a clever man, he was certainly not a clean one. The corners of his mouth were greasy, as if he had been

dining on an oily *olla podrida*, and omitted to wipe his lips afterwards with the customary napkins.

The Count de Cannes returned his gaze with equal effrontery, and the two men stood still, confronting one another.

Dr. Narvaez was astonished, but cool.

The count was nervous and expectant, but externally bold and collected.

(To be continued.)

HANGING AND FLOATING GARDENS

THE Mexicans had a passion for flowers. They collected together, in splendid gardens, such as were remarkable for perfume or for brilliancy of colour. To these they added medicinal plants, methodically arranged—shrubs distinguished by their blossoms or their foliage, by the excellency of their fruit, or their berries—and also trees of elegant or majestic appearance. They delighted in laying out their terraces and bowers on hilly slopes, where they looked as if suspended.

Aqueducts brought thither water from a distance, which overflowed in cascades, or filled spacious basins tenanted by the choicest fish. Mysterious pavilions were hidden among the foliage, and statues reared their forms amid the flowers. All the kinds of animals that we assemble in our gardens consecrated to science—such as the Zoological Gardens, and the Jardin des Plantes at Paris,—contributed to the ornament or curiosity of these resorts of pleasure.

Birds were there, of beautiful plumage, kept in cages as large as houses; there also were wild beasts, animals of various kinds, and even serpents. Bernal Diaz there first saw the rattlesnake, which he describes as having "castanets in its tail."

One of the royal gardens, two leagues from Tezcuco, was formed on the side of a hill, whose summit was reached by an ascent of five hundred steps, and was crowned by a basin, whence, by an effort of hydraulic skill, water flowed in succession into three other reservoirs, adorned with gigantic statues.

Cortez also mentions the gardens of a Cacique, which were not less than two leagues in circumference. Another curiously existed in the chinampas, or floating gardens, scattered over the lakes. These artificial islets, of fifty to a hundred yards long, served for the cultivation of vegetables and flowers for the market of the capital. Some of these islets had consistency enough for shrubs of some size to grow on, or to bear even a hut of light materials. They were at pleasure moved to the bank by poles, or were made to move over the waters with their floral treasures by the same means.

This spectacle impressed the Spaniard's greatly, and, according to Bernal Diaz, made them say that they had been transported into an enchanted region like those they had read of in the romance of "Amadis de Gaul."

THE new decimal coinage of Maximilian, issued at the time of the arrival of the Emperor at Vera Cruz, bears his superscription, with the crowned eagle standing on the nopal, or prickly pear of Mexico. Its value is stated thus:—"10 c."—ten centimes.

EXTRAORDINARY LONGEVITY.—There are at present residing in the same mansion in Cardiganshire three sisters, whose united ages fall but seventeen years short of three centuries. The sisters have reached the respective ages of 92, 94, and 97 years, and are one and all in the enjoyment of good health and unimpaired faculties. Even the oldest of the three is able at present to dispense with the use of spectacles in reading—a circumstance almost unprecedented at such ripe age.

STATISTICS OF "JEWS."—The Jewish Record says: "The *Wilna Messenger* states that, according to the latest calculations made, the number of Jews now amounts to 7,000,000, about one-half of whom reside in Europe. Russia contains the most, 1,220,000; next comes Austria, 853,000; then comes Prussia, 284,500, and other countries of Germany together, 192,000. One remarkable fact is that in France, Belgium, and England, where the Jews are entirely emancipated, the number is gradually decreasing, while in those countries where they are still subjected to a certain restraint they increase."

THE EFFECT OF MARRIAGE.—Doubtless you have remarked with satisfaction how the little oddities of men who marry rather late in life are pruned away speedily after marriage. You have found a man who used to be shabbily and carelessly dressed, with a huge shirt collar, frayed at the edges, and a glaring yellow silk pocket-handkerchief, broken of these things, and become a pattern of neatness. You have seen a man whose hair and whiskers were ridiculously cut speedily become like other human beings. You have seen a clergyman who wore a long beard in a little while appear without one. You have seen a man who

used to sing ridiculous sentimental songs leave them off. You have seen a man who took snuff copiously, and who generally had his breast covered with snuff, abandon the vile habit. A wife is the grand wielder of the moral pruning knife. If Johnson's wife had lived, there would have been no hoarding up of bits of orange peel; no touching all the posts in walking along the street; no eating and drinking with a disgusting voracity. If Oliver Goldsmith had been married, he would never have worn that memorable and ridiculous coat. Whenever you find a man whom you know little about oddly dressed, or talking ridiculously, or exhibiting any eccentricity of manner, you may be tolerably sure that he is not a married man. For the little corners are rounded off, the little shoots are pruned away, in married men. Wives generally have much more sense than their husbands, especially when the husbands are clever men. The wife's advice is like the ballast that keeps the ship steady. They are like the wholesome, though painful, shears snipping off little growths of self-conceit.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A WOMAN'S STRUGGLES.

Alas! all gone—rent, disintwined
At some mysterious touch; apart they fall,
As the sand pillars by the desert's wind.

Mrs. Hemans.

Now that Basil was gone, who was to attend to the business of the farm? The old lady had sunk into a state of apathy and helplessness. Upon Theodora all the management devolved. Upon herself depended the salvation of the family from poverty and ruin.

But Theodora had but little experience of business affairs.

Seeing that old Mrs. Wyld was no longer able even to give advice and direction, she was fain to take counsel with the farm labourers. She wanted money, too, but knew not where to make application. The tradespeople began to send in their bills.

"I fear I shall not be able to settle them yet," said Theodora; "I must apply for letters of administration upon the estate of my deceased husband, and then all claims shall be faithfully discharged."

But, with such large debts staring her in the face, she had not courage to give orders for the supplies she needed.

The amount of their debts seemed at first to be almost incredible to poor Theodora, but presently a light broke upon her. Basil, with his usual reckless generosity, and indiscriminating charity, had been feeding and clothing others, besides his own family. She found, upon adding up the various accounts, that they owed at least a hundred and fifty pounds.

How was she to pay the money? She consulted one of the farm servants.

"How much do you suppose are the profits of our farm for a year?" she said.

"May be sixty—may be eighty pounds," he replied.

"No more?"

"Less if we don't have good crops, maybe."

Meanwhile the old woman grew every day more greedy, exacting, and peevish, as she grew more childish. The poor girl secretly disposed of her jewellery, and thus was old Mrs. Wyld made comfortable for a few weeks, and was comparatively happy. Basil's estate did not yield very much when it came to the pinch.

Creditors hovered round like birds of prey, and the fortunes of the unhappy house tended rapidly from bad to worse.

There was a great drought upon the land, and the crops were burnt up by the sun.

"Heaven help us," said the farmers, "if we do not have rain."

June and July however passed, and the drought continued.

"If we have no rain soon, our crops will be all lost," they said.

August came and passed. The wheat had been ruined, but there was still a possibility of the late corn being saved.

"The Lord only knows what will become of us if he does not send rain," said Theodora; and in other words many more anxious people besides her.

Oh, rain! rain! it was hoped for, wished for, called for in the houses, and prayed for in the churches.

Oh, rain! rain! The poor panting cattle, on the parched and calcined meadows, supplicated for it, in their mute suffering—in their choked and panting throats, and dry out-hanging tongues, and haggard eyes! Oh, rain! rain!

But the rain came not.

The wealthiest farmers felt their losses sensibly, while the poor were nearly ruined.

Towns and villages, too, suffered in their turn, through the farmers, and a general scarcity impended. The late Basil Wyld's creditors now pressed his widow cruelly. By the disposal of her personal effects she alone contrived to keep the house going.

But things could not go on thus for ever. The crops were all spoilt. Creditors still pressed; there were no means left of obtaining money, unless it were by the sale of a portion of the land.

It was sold at a great sacrifice. The money it realized was forestalled, and wholly insufficient to meet the claims upon it.

"What was to be done? More was sold, and they struggled on again; the old woman's health declining rapidly, her temper growing every day more trying, and her whims and caprices more difficult to bear with."

One day, the farm labourer—a sort of bailiff he had become—went to market with a load of hay, and ran away with the money which he had obtained by its sale. Theodora learnt then that he had long robbed her.

All this time she had heard nothing of Genevieve. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick—weariness the heart out. Of late Theodora had ceased to send to the post-office.

Long since she had felt, indeed, a sort of shame in calling for a letter which never by any chance was found.

For many years Genevieve had been the poor girl's only friend; and now for years she had been silent.

Nothing now could be imagined more solitary than the life this young creature led. She had no correspondents, no neighbours, no friends in the world, with whom she could consult in her troubles.

Old Mrs. Wyld sat smiling in her chair, and dying slowly and calmly from day to day; her intellect had gradually departed; her affections only remained—and these last were centred on Theodora only among all living creatures.

The memory of things from the date of Basil's leaving home, the evening of his death, had either faded entirely away or become hopelessly confused. She still often believed Basil to be just gone to the post-office, or momentarily expected back.

A dreadful change, however, was creeping over the old woman. She seemed even unconscious of the existence of the persons around her, and spoke to the absent or the dead as though they were in her immediate presence, and held imaginary conversations with her dead son!

"Great heavens! this is terrible!" Theodora murmured. "She is removed far from us ever, even while she sits there in our sight! Her body is with us—is living—and her soul is far away!"

One day she thought the old lady was sleeping; and thinking that she had slept very long, Theodora came to look at her.

She sat with one hand crossed over the other, and lying in her lap; her eyes were closed, and a gentle smile lingered round her lips.

Some indefinable impulse impelled Theodora to lift up one of the hands, and it was heavy and cold. The spirit had passed peacefully away, leaving its parting smile impressed upon the clay!

It was after the death and funeral of the old lady that Theodora felt the full weight of her own desolation.

There were none left to love her, and no one whom she could love. She was ALL ALONE!

The strength that was no longer needed for the support of others now failed herself. A feebleness, like idiocy, fell upon her intellect and will—a mortal weakness, nigh unto death, fell upon her frame.

She no longer aspired or endeavoured—hoped or feared—thought or loved.

She scarcely lived. One autumn day, Theodora sat musing in the dreary little parlour. All was deserted and silent in the house, and all was still and lonely in the fields and yard; the high grass bending over and meeting across the narrow foot path leading from the garden gate—spoke silently and eloquently of the desolate and abandoned state of the premises.

"It is in my own heart that death is, after all—the death of starvation. I wonder how many die of the heart's starvation."

She arose wearily, and went up-stairs to try and distract her thoughts by work, but scarcely had she done so when she heard a knock at the door, and the servant man came after her to say that a lady wanted to speak to her.

She returned to the parlour; and found, standing, looking out from a distant window, a lady, very plainly dressed, yet bearing, in her whole appearance and attitude, the unmistakable marks of distinction.

Something caused Theodora's heart to flutter as she hastened towards the lady, who turned at her approach.

"Oh, Genevieve! Genevieve!" exclaimed Theodora,

as she threw herself, nearly fainting with joy, upon the bosom of her friend.

Genevieve sustained her sinking frame, holding her near her heart, and kissing her fondly and frequently, until her paroxysm of joyous sobs and tears was over, and then she sat down upon a chair, drawing Theodora upon her lap.

"Oh, what a joyful, joyful surprise at last!" exclaimed the latter, between a sob and a smile.

"A surprise! Why, dear, were you not expecting me?"

"I had expected to hear from you month after month—month after month—until expectation wore itself out. The vain hope at last seemed to craze me."

And she sobbed again.

"But, my love," said Genevieve, caressing her, "we did write, and our letters are probably waiting for you."

"I am glad I did not get the letter now. I would rather this happy surprise. It is so often we have shocks of pain, so seldom shocks of joy, dearest; and it is you, indeed. Oh, let me look at you again. Life has been such a desert waste to me since you went away. Oh, Genevieve, let me gaze upon you!" cried Theodora, almost hysterically striving to subdue her sobs and clear her eyes from the blinding tears, that she might the better gaze upon her friend. "Yes, it is you, more brilliant and beautiful than ever. My heart will break from the happiness of seeing you. Yet, oh, Genevieve, I wish God would take you to himself now."

"Why do you say such things?"

"You look so beaming—so radiant. No sorrow has yet come near you. Oh, Genevieve, this world is so dark with sorrow. Can you escape?"

"You have been walking in their shadows, my dearest. There are sorrows, but the world is not dark with them."

"Do you know, dearest, what has happened since you went away?"

"Yes, my dear, I know."

"Ah, well, let it pass. Since I see you, all is well with me. While for you, I hope that heaven will keep you from such sorrow," said Theodora, in a voice of prayerful love.

"I thank and bless you for your sweet affection; but you do not ask me after my travelling companions."

"True—I thought—" said Theodora, in a faint voice.

Genevieve came to her aid.

"They are, for the present, my guests."

Theodora exerted herself, and recovered her voice.

"Austin and Ellen are well?"

"Yes."

"And happy?"

"Passably."

"And Mr. Wakefield, who went out with you also?"

"Wakefield is well. He has, during our tour of the continent, written a book of travels—for which I predict a great success."

"Wakefield! A book of travels!"

"Yes, dear."

"Wakefield turned author!" cried Theodora, in astonishment.

"Yes, it is astonishing; but wait till you see him, and you will be more astonished. But now, dearest, let us talk of yourself. First of all, can you come back with me to-morrow?"

"I—I—"

"Well."

"You won't be offended, but who shall I meet there?"

"No one but myself."

"I will go then, happily."

Genevieve was looking at her very earnestly, as if pleading for the confidence that she withheld.

Theodora had read her thoughts, and answered them.

"Yes," she said, "broken, and wasted, and sorrowful as I am—wrecked in health and happiness, and hope—I do not wish to meet old friends, who are happy in all that can make this life happy. I should be a shadow in their sunshine, so I do not wish to see anyone but your dear self."

Yes, Theodora, indeed, was wasted, broken, and wrecked.

Theodora read her thoughts again, and replied to them.

"Look at me, Genevieve, this is the end of all my high aspirations. Once I dreamed of a glorious life. Very early in childhood my dream had birth; and now—now where are my castles? Fallen to the ground."

"Your dreams were prophecies; you must fulfil them."

"Oh, do not mock me. Ruined in health, beauty, form, and hope; widowed in the bitterest sense of the heart's eternal widowhood; alone, poor, crippled, sick,

and helpless. Alas! this is the end of all. This is the end of all my earthly aspirations. This is death and the grave," said Theodora, in a voice that sounded like a dying moan.

"And the beginning of achievement," said Genevieve. "You have hitherto only aspired, now you must achieve."

"Do not mock my despair," said Theodora, bitterly.

"What! despair at twenty-five?"

"Alas, Genevieve, my soul seems dead within me."

"Oh, no! impossible! you have been buried alive. I call your soul from its living grave; awake, and put on your strength."

Genevieve then took the weak and desponding one in her own strong, beautiful arms, and placed her head upon her broad and loving breast, and looked down upon her as though she would have transferred from her own rich and vital power, and glorious spiritual bounty, all the life that feeble frame could sustain.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE SWOOP OF THE VULTURE.

Is there no constancy in earthly things?
No happiness in us but what must alter?
No life without the frequent change of fortune?
What miseries we are unto ourselves,
Even when full content seems to sit by us,
What daily cares and sorrows!

Beaumont and Fletcher.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, Arthur took a gay and loving leave of Gladdys, and started to go on board of his ship, to report for duty.

Gladdys, standing at the rustic gate where she had parted with him, watched him quite out of sight, and then went back to the house, ran up into her own room, threw herself upon a chair, and burst into tears.

This was very weak and foolish, as she frankly said to herself, because he was only gone for the day, and he would be back again at night. But then this was the first time he had left her since their marriage, and she felt so lonely in the strange house, that she could not help weeping a little.

When she had wept herself into a state of composure, and while she was quietly drying her eyes, there came a rap at her door.

"Come in," she said, expecting to see Harriet, who fulfilled the duties of chambermaid as well as cook.

"If you please, ma'am," said the woman, curtseying at the open door, "the young ladies, ma'am, sends their respects to you, and says how they hope you won't 'main up here a-mopin' by yourself; but will come down to their sittin' room, and look at their fancy quilt, as they've just stretched out in the frame; and they'll be very glad to see you."

"The young ladies! What young ladies, Harriet?" inquired Gladdys, with surprise and interest; for youth loves the companionship of youth; and visions of social enjoyment arose before the young bride's imagination. "What young ladies, Harriet?"

"Why, o' course, my young ladies."

"Yours?"

"Yes—my young missesses."

"I thought you belonged to the Miss Cranes?"

"Why so I does. It's them as I studies to."

"But—you spoke of young ladies; are they relations of the landladies?" inquired the mystified Gladdys.

"Lord bless my soul and body! ain't it them as I'm a talkin' 'bout all the time? The landladies, my young missesses, the Miss Cranes—Miss Polly, and Miss Milly, and Miss Jenny Crane!"

Gladdys stared for a moment, in the deepest perplexity.

"It's my three young missesses as you lives 'long of as has sent me to fetch you," said Harriet, just a little impatiently.

Then Gladdys, as the truth broke on her, and she understood the whole matter, burst into a gay laugh.

This honest, stolid, middle-aged woman, who called the venerable old ladies her "young" missesses, had doubtless been taught to do so when she was a child, and they were spinsters of about twenty-five years of age. And from habit she had gone on calling them so ever since.

Gladdys laughed, as she answered:

"Tell your 'young' ladies, with my respects, that I thank them, and I will be down presently."

Harriet went away to take this answer, and Gladdys soon followed her down-stairs, and into a pleasant back room, that overlooked a poultry yard and a wheat field, with a barn and some ricks.

This room was furnished, like the others, plainly and neatly, much of the furniture being of domestic manufacture. There was a home-made carpet on the floor, and green paper blinds at the windows, and a green paper fire-board against the fire-place. And there were plain deal tables, and wooden chairs with plated straw seats, all of domestic manufacture,

ranged against the walls. And over the mantelpiece, and between the windows, were gaudily-coloured wood-cuts, representing saints and angels, with red and blue dresses, and yellow glories around their heads.

In the middle of the room, a very gay patch-work quilt was stretched in its frame for quilting, and around it sat the sisters. As neither of them ever did anything singly, all arose at once to meet and welcome their guest.

"What a beautiful quilt!" exclaimed Gladdys, more in good nature than in sincere admiration, as she approached the frame, and looked at the design of the patch-work—groups of gorgeous flowers, shaped out of bright-coloured scraps of calico, and sewed on a white ground.

"Yes; we thought you would like it. It is to compete for the prize in the exhibition," said Miss Polly, gazing with pride upon her work.

"I think you ought to get it for this elaborate piece of art," said Gladdys. "But come, now, if I am to sit with you, I must help you. I can quilt beautifully."

"Oh, Mrs. Colonel Pollard! The idea of our troubling you to quilt! We could not think of it, ma'am," said Miss Milly.

Gladdys did not step to correct the mistake in her name, nor to argue the question of her assistance. For the first, she had so often gently reminded the sisters that she was only Mrs. Lieutenant Powis, and they had so often weekly begged pardon, and so inevitably fallen into the same blunder again, that she finally yielded the point and consented to be—with them—Mrs. Colonel Pollard, for the remainder of her sojourn in the house, if not for her life. For the second, she took her "housewife" from her pocket, fitted on her thimble, threaded her needle, and seated herself beside Miss Jenny, who sat on one side of the frame opposite to Miss Polly and Miss Milly, who sat on the other.

"Well, if you will, you will, I suppose," said Miss Jenny, resignedly.

"Certainly," said Gladdys, laughing and commencing work.

And as her youthful eyes, and nimble fingers, and better skill, enabled her to do the work three times as fast as the three sisters together could do theirs, she was soon considered an immense acquisition.

"It would be downright robbery to take board for you, child," said Miss Polly, bluntly.

Gladdys looked up in amazement.

"Downright robbery!" persisted Miss Polly. "For just consider—this quilt is to win a prize of one hundred pounds. Besides which, it is worth a good sum in itself. Now, we are three and you are one. Now, you are doing as much work as we three together. Now, three into one hundred will go—oh, good gracious alive! how is one to get three into one hundred?"

"Call in Harriet. She's good at figures. She always counts up the market money correctly you know," advised Miss Milly.

As this counsel met the general approbation, the woman was summoned and the matter explained to her.

"You mean," said Harriet, "that over and above the actual value of the quilt there is a hundred pounds prize money, which ought to be divided fair and equal among those that quilt it?"

"Yes, that's what we mean! And as Mrs. Colonel Pollard does as much as all three of us together, we want to know how much her share ought to be," said Miss Jenny.

"Well, then, it ought to be just half, of course; fifty pounds for you three, and fifty pounds for her one," said Harriet.

"There, now," said Miss Polly; "see how quick Harriet made it out, without doing any sum eisher. Now, you see, Mrs. Colonel Pollard, if you insist upon helping us, at this rate, you will be entitled to fifty pounds prize money, and it would be downright robbery to ask your board."

Gladdys laughed and blushed, but answered gravely:

"I please myself, Miss Polly."

With any creature less simple and innocent than these sisters, she must have been angry; but she could not be so with them.

Harriet was about to leave the room, when Miss Milly stopped her.

"Wait! we might as well order dinner while you are here! Mrs. Colonel Pollard, my dear, as the colonel will not be home, we have no one but you to consult. Now what would you like for your dinner?"

"Anything at all that is convenient, Miss Milly."

"Oh, nonsense; speak your mind! I will tell you what we have got now, and you can pick and choose. First, there's the young pig we killed yesterday, which would be very nice roasted with sage and inyauns—but perhaps you think it too airy in the season for roast pig; and maybe you don't like inyauns,

which they certainly do affect the breast?" said Miss Jenny, patting in her word, and pausing for a reply.

"Anything you please, my dear Miss Jenny; it does not matter to me."

"And then there's a leg of mutton that would be nice with caper sauses; and then there's a pair of ducks—"

"Whatever you like, Miss Polly."

"No, no; but what you like, my dear! Now detail us!"

Gladdys looked from one sister to the other, trying to find the direction of their inclinations; and fancying that they set strongly towards roast pork, she decided in favour of that savoury dish. And Harriet received her orders accordingly, and retired to execute them.

The sisters were very talkative; but in their garrulity they were more communicative than inquisitive, fonder of narrating their own family affairs than of inquiring into those of others.

Gladdys was pleased with these traits of character, as they saved her the trouble of parrying awkward questions.

In the conversation that followed, she learned much of the sisters' history.

She learned that they owned the house and the market garden in which they lived; that they had one other sister, the youngest of the family, Amy, who had married, against their parents' will, a "southern" of the name of Hart, and had gone off with him; and of her, long ago disinherited and exiled, if not dead, they had not heard for many, many years; and that they had a brother, a priest, who came once or twice a week to take tea with them.

These and many other minor matters were gratuitously told to Gladdys, who listened with friendly interest.

Upon the whole, her day passed very cheerfully.

Late in the afternoon she put on her bonnet and walked out to meet Arthur. And she met him within half a mile of the house, and they strolled back through the fields together.

"I have my leave renewed for a week, dear Gladdys. When I told my captain how lately I had been married, he laughed, and voluntarily gave me another week's leave of absence. So, as to-morrow is Sunday, I will take you to church, and on Monday we will go and see some of the public buildings," said Arthur, as he drew her arm within his own, and walked on towards their temporary home.

Their programme was carried out to the letter.

On Saturday morning Arthur said to her:

"Now, dearest, I think we have made very good use of our time, and seen as much as it was possible to see in six days. This is the seventh and last day of my leave. I have reserved for this day the greatest treat of all—the treat of showing you over my ship! So get on your bonnet, and we will start."

Gladdys lost no time, you may be sure. She was soon ready.

And they set out gaily to walk on that pleasant autumnal morning.

They reached the port in good time. The fine frigate *Neptune* lay about a quarter of a mile from the shore.

Arthur hailed the ship, which immediately sent a boat to bring the young couple off. Arthur lifted Gladdys in, and they were swiftly rowed to the side of the frigate.

The captain, who was expecting this visit, met them on the deck.

Arthur presented Gladdys, who was received with much gallantry and distinction, and introduced to the officers, and to their wives, who had come on board to meet the young bride.

They all went over the ship together. Gladdys was interested in everything that was shown her—the decks, the ropes, the sails, the rudder, the guns, &c.; but most of all in Arthur's little cabin, saved in her eyes, from his three years' occupation of it.

"And did you really go around Cape Horn in this cabin? And when you were on the Pacific, did you really sit here and look around you, and see the very same objects that you see now?" she smilingly asked.

"Of course I did," laughed Arthur.

"Well, that seems the quaintest part of a sailor's life, to me! For when we lands-people go away, we leave home and all our familiar surroundings; but you take your home with you everywhere!"

"So far as a dwelling-place makes a home, I suppose we do," said Arthur.

When they had finished their inspection of the ship, they were invited into the captain's cabin, where an elegant collation was spread.

After they had partaken of this repast, they bade farewell to their hospitable entertainers, and set out on their return home.

The mountain-girl was a good walker, and who declared that she was not the least fatigued; and she

declined the carriage that Arthur would have called for her.

As they walked, talking of the pleasant events of the day, an incident occurred that disturbed the peace of Gladys. As a carriage rolled rapidly past them, she started, turned pale, and convulsively clasped the arm of Arthur.

"Why, what ails you, my dearest? Were you afraid of being run over?" inquired Arthur, drawing the trembling little hand closer within his arm.

"Oh, no, no, no! but—didn't you see?"

"What, love?"

"Mrs. Llewellyn was in that carriage!"

"Nonsense!"

"She was, indeed! I saw her! She met my glance and drew back!"

"But even if this is so, why should it disturb you? You are safe."

"Safe! Oh, yes; I know I am safe with you, dear Arthur! I know she cannot separate us now; but still I tremble at the sight of that woman!"

"Your trembling is but the effect of association, the reflex action of the old tyranny and oppression."

"Oh, it is not altogether of the past I think! I tremble for the future!"

"But, dearest love, why? She can do you no manner of harm, except in keeping you out of your inheritance until you are twenty-one. And we know that already, and are reconciled to it."

"I know she cannot really harm me; but, I shiver at the sight of her, as we are said to do when we pass over the spot that is to be our own grave!"

"Sheer nervousness, my darling! Think no more of Mrs. Llewellyn! Her day of power over you is gone," said Arthur, drawing her arm closer to his side.

They sauntered on at a leisurely pace, and at sunset reached their suburban home, where they found the tea-table set, and Father Crane, the priest of St. Peter's, there to spend the evening with his sisters.

He was a tall, thin, fair-faced, grey-haired man, very like his sisters; so like them that he had a humorous way of classing himself among them as—"Myself and the other old ladies."

Father Crane was presented in due form to "Colonel and Mrs. Pollard."

Arthur took the first private opportunity of correcting that chronic mistake in his name. But as Father Crane called the young couple nothing but "Sir" and "Madam," Arthur had no opportunity of judging whether he profited by the correction.

The priest went away the same evening. And soon after his departure, the family separated and retired.

And thus ended the young couple's holiday week.

The next day, although it was the Sabbath, Arthur was obliged to report for duty. So, after breakfast, Gladys, as before, walked with him down to the gate, to take leave of him there. She was much more cheerful than on their preceding short parting of the week before. No shadow of approaching evil clouded her spirit. He kissed her gaily and went out of the gate. Then he turned around and lingered a little while, looking at her and talking; and then he laughed and hurried away—she steadily watching him, and he frequently looking back and smiling at her, until he was out of sight.

Then she returned to the house.

Gladys went to church alone that morning. As the walk was very long, she did not go again in the afternoon, but remained quietly at home, while the old ladies went to vespers at their own church. But the young bride was not lonely. Her thoughts were pleasantly occupied with anticipations of her husband's speedy return. He had promised to be back by sunset, and the sun was nearly down.

She walked to the gate to watch for him. And then, as the afternoon was so fine, she strolled out to meet him on his return. She strolled a much longer way from home than she had expected to do when she passed the gate; but still she did not meet him. The sun went down; the shades of evening came on; and still she walked on, but still she did not see him.

She met the old ladies, however, on their return from church; and very much shocked they were to see her.

"Dear me, Mrs. Colonel Pollard, my dear, is this you walking all alone by yourself at this solemn hour of the evening?" exclaimed Miss Polly, and all her sisters joined in the chorus.

"I came out to meet my husband; but he is late, and I have walked farther than I intended. I cannot think what keeps him," said Gladys.

"Why, child, it is likely as the colonel has come the other way and is at home now," said Miss Milly.

"Is there another way?"

"Yes."

"Oh, then, I suppose he has taken that path and is at home. I will go back with you. How fortunate it is that I met you! It would have been dreadful for

me to have had to go home alone at this hour," said Gladys.

"It would have been dangerous, my dear," said Miss Jenny.

They walked on rapidly, considering the age of the sisters; but it was quite dark when they reached the house.

Gladys ran in.

"Has my husband returned?" she eagerly inquired of Harriet.

"Lor, no, ma'am! I thought as you would bring him home 'long o' you," said the woman.

"What can keep him?" complained Gladys.

"Duty, my dear child. You know these military and naval gentlemen's time is not their own," said Miss Polly.

"True! very true! Don't wait tea for him, dear Miss Polly. You are tired, and want your tea, and he may not be home until late. Oh, yes! it is all right!" said Gladys, trying to restrain her impatience, for as yet it was not anxiety that she felt.

"Well, dear, just as you say. We can keep the kettle over the fire and have fresh tea made for him when he does come, you know," said Miss Milly.

After tea, Gladys went and sat upon the porch to watch and listen for the beloved footstep that she expected every moment to hear. But she heard no sound but the sighing of the wind among the trees, the patter of the falling leaves, and a strange, regular, monotonous flitting over her head, for which she could not account. When, however, her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, and she could clearly see the starlit sky, and the tree-studded ground, and could even discern the distant gate, she saw that the noise was produced by the flitting out of innumerable bats, that came from a hole in the roof of the porch singly and at intervals of half a minute, and flew off into the night sky.

Gladys was so amazed at the great number that came out, that she began to count the remaining ones as they appeared. And she was so interested in this strange amusement that she forgot her impatience for Arthur's return.

The bats were still flitting out at the rate of two a minute, and Gladys was still counting them as they appeared, when suddenly Miss Jenny opened the door and spoke to her:

"My dear Mrs. Colonel Pollard, it is half past nine, our bed-time; hadn't you better come in out of the night air?"

"Oh, no, please, Miss Jenny. The night air doesn't hurt me. It is so pleasant. You go to bed. I will sit here and wait for my husband. He will soon be here now. And when he comes we will take care to fasten up the house all right," pleaded Gladys.

"Well, my dear, just as you please. Good-night!"

"Good-night, dear Miss Jenny."

The old lady retired, and Gladys resumed her lonely watch. She gave over counting the bats, and sat watching and listening. Long, long she remained there on her dark vigil. Still she was rather impatient than alarmed; for, at last, when she was worn out with watching and fell asleep on her post, it was with these words on her lips:

"He is on duty; oh! I know it is all right!"

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE PREY.

Oh, how this spring of love resembleth

The uncertain glory of an April day;

That now it is all smiles and brightness,

And by-and-by a cloud takes all away.

Shakespeare

"WHY, child! Why, Mrs. Colonel Pollard, my dear! Why, you have never been sitting here all night, a sleeping in the open porch, and a catching of your death in the open air, with the house door wide open for anybody to come in and rob the house! Oh, dear! deary me!"

These were the words, accompanied with several gentle shakes, that aroused Gladys from the deep sleep of exhaustion into which she had fallen, and in which she had lain since midnight.

She started up, shivering as with an ague-fit, rubbed her eyes, gazed around, saw that it was broad day, and recognized Miss Polly Crane.

"My dear child, whatever did you do such an imprudent thing for? It was enough to a-kill you!" continued the old lady.

While she spoke, Gladys, so suddenly roused from a deep and dreamless sleep, stared around in utter bewilderment, unable to remember where she was or how she came there.

But then, as her memory slowly returned, she grew alarmed, looked anxiously at Miss Polly, and exclaimed:

"Oh, Miss Polly, has my husband returned yet? Do you know anything of him?"

"Why, no, child; how should I? I have just got up and opened the house. And I was never more sur-

prised nor more shocked in my life than I was when I saw you a sitting here on that identical green bench, with your head leaned down upon your hand, fast asleep. My goodness, whatever did you do it for? Don't you know you risked your life? In the fall of the year, too! when fever and ague is going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom it may devour! What made you do it?"

"I fell asleep while I was waiting for my husband! Oh, what can have kept him away all night? But perhaps he might have come home in the night, and passed me in the dark without seeing me, and gone up-stairs and gone to sleep!" exclaimed Gladys.

And full of this wild idea, she started up, and ran away to her chamber to ascertain the truth.

In a moment, however, she came running back, and saying:

"He is not there! He has not been there! I might have known it before! Because if he had come home in the night, and passed me in the dark, and gone up into our room, he would have missed me directly, and made inquiries, and found me. Oh, dear me! what could have kept him out all night?"

"My dear child, didn't you warn me yourself that sometimes he would be away all night on military or naval duty?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure I did. It is that which has kept him! Oh, of course, it must be that," said Gladys; but she shivered as she spoke.

"I tell you what, my dear, you have took a bad cold, that's what you have took. Now, come right in to the kitchen fire and warm yourself, that's a dear. And Harriet will have a hot cup of coffee ready in no time," said Miss Polly, leading the way into the house.

Gladys obediently followed, and sat down shivering in the chimney corner, holding her hands over the blaze and watching the kettle boil, while Harriet ground the coffee.

"Now, what do you think of this child, Harriet? Do you think she hasn't been sitting up all night waiting for that husband of hers to come home, and he on duty all the time?"

"That's bad! I have no doubt she's caught cold, by her shivering and shaking so much. I advise you to go to bed, and be covered up warm, and I'll bring you some hot coffee to the bedside," said the woman, kindly.

"Yes, do, child," added Miss Polly.

"No, thank you both very much; but, as soon I have taken something to give me a little strength and warmth, I am going to Arthur," replied Gladys.

"To Arthur!" exclaimed the mistress and maid in a breath.

"Yes; because I cannot bear the suspense. If he was on duty all night, he may also be engaged all day; and he may not be able to return before night—perhaps not even at night; and in the meantime I should be half dying with anxiety. So, odd as the proceeding may seem, I shall go to his ship to inquire after him," said Gladys; but as she spoke, her teeth chattered like castanets.

"I tell you what—you've got an ague on you now! And you must go to bed. And I will send a messenger down to the ship to make inquiries for you," urged Miss Polly.

"No, no, thank you! indeed, I could not wait for any messenger to go and come! I must know all as soon as possible," persisted Gladys.

And no arguments or entreaties could move her from her purpose.

She would not even wait for the regular breakfast to be got ready, but went up-stairs immediately to make a hasty morning toilet; and then, as soon as the coffee had boiled, she drank a cup; and then set out upon her long walk.

It was one of those fine, bright, frosty, bracing mornings common to that season of the year; and between the effects of the exhilarating atmosphere and the coffee she had drunk, and the hope of speedily seeing Arthur, Gladys felt her health and spirits revive.

"If he has been on duty all night, he may be let off early this morning; and in that case I shall meet him on the way! How surprised he will be to see me! And ah! if he is still on shipboard, how more than surprised—how shocked he will be to see me coming there alone, to seek him! Perhaps he will be angry; but I do not think so. He may think I act very foolishly, but he will not be angry with me. At least, I know nothing that he could do would make me angry."

Such was the course of her thoughts, as she walked on, until she reached the water's edge, from which she saw the ship lying at anchor off the shore.

She stood there and waved her handkerchief, hoping that some of the officers on deck would see her, and send off a boat to fetch her. Her hope was realized. Captain Williamson, standing on deck, glass in hand, was the first to observe her. He immediately dis-

patched a boat, with an officer and four men, to her service.

The young midshipman in command smilingly saluted her, as she stepped ashore, and asked:

"Do you wish to go on board, Mrs. Powis?"

"Yes, if you please. No, perhaps not. I really don't know yet. I came down to inquire after my husband. Is he on board, do you know?" inquired Gladys, hesitating and blushing in her embarrassment.

"No, madam, he has not been here yet this morning," answered the midshipman.

"No! why, has he not been in the ship all night?" exclaimed Gladys, in alarm.

"Oh, no, madam! The captain did not require him."

"When—when did he leave the ship?"

"At four bells. I brought him off myself."

"Four bells—what is that?"

"Six o'clock in the afternoon, I mean, it was, when I brought him off, and he set out to walk home."

Gladys threw her hand to her head, and reeled as if she would have fallen; but, recovering herself with an effort, she said:

"Mr. Mills—you are Mr. Mills, I believe?"

"Yes, madam—that is my name," said the officer, touching his hat.

"Mr. Mills, then, did he—my husband, I mean—say where he was going?"

"Yes, madam; he said that he was going directly home, for that you were not as well as he could wish, and that he was very anxious on your account."

Gladys had turned as pale as death, and she was trembling in every limb, when she said:

"Mr. Mills, he never came home last night. Oh! do you think there is really any cause to be alarmed? There are no such persons as footpads or highwaymen about, are there?"

The young officer had stepped back a pace or two, and was gazing at her in surprise.

"Oh, answer me! You do not think there is any just reason for anxiety, do you?" entreated Gladys, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes appealingly to the face of the officer, for the want of a more experienced counsellor.

"Blest if I know, ma'am! Not home all night, after his hurry to get there! That is very odd!" replied the officer, quite startled out of his self-possession and politeness.

"But might not something have prevented him—something not dangerous, I mean—something like business, or news, or the arrival of a friend?" gasped Gladys, catching at these vague conjectures as the drowning catch at straws.

"I don't know, I'm sure, ma'am," replied the young officer, who showed as much consternation as Gladys herself.

"I must request you to assist me into the boat. I will go on board the ship, and see Captain Williamson. Perhaps he will be able to throw some light upon this subject."

"Perhaps he will, ma'am. Take my hand," said he, gallantly aiding Gladys to step into the boat.

"Give way, boys," he said, as soon as she was seated. And the boat was shoved off.

They soon reached the side of the ship, on the deck of which they found Captain Williamson waiting to receive the visitor.

"Good morning, madam," he said smilingly, holding out his hand to assist her in reaching the deck. "You look rather pale and tired with this climbing. Never mind. There! you are safe now. Where is Mr. Powis? And why is he not with you?"

"Ah, sir, I do not know. I came here in the expectation of hearing of him! He has not been home since yesterday morning!" said Gladys, as she stood, white, and nearly breathless, before the captain.

"Not home since yesterday morning! Why—where is he?" demanded that officer, in surprise.

"Ah, where indeed, sir! I came here in the hope of finding out!" replied Gladys, beginning to wring her hands.

"Why—that—is—very—strange," said the captain, slowly and emphatically, dropping each word like a bullet, as he gazed inquiringly upon her face.

"Oh, sir, may he not have gone out on business that left him no time to explain to you or take leave of me?" said Gladys, clasping her hands and fixing her imploring eyes upon the face of Captain Williamson, as though she were praying him to say yes and give her some comfort.

But even in the midst of his own anxiety, the captain could not help smiling at her simplicity. But he had not the heart to resist those pleading eyes and hands, and dash her last hope to the ground. He answered evasively and even insincerely:

"We cannot tell what may have detained him; nothing that need give you any uneasiness, I am sure."

"Oh, do you think not? Are you sure not?" she inquired.

"Certain. I will, however, inquire among my

officers; they may know something of this strange absence, or its cause; Mr. Powis may have dropped some words while in conversation with them, that may afford some clue to this strange affair."

"Oh, do, do, do, Captain Williamson! And I shall be deeply indebted to you," said Gladys, earnestly.

"Step into my cabin then, Mrs. Powis. My wife is there, and she will be glad to see you," said the captain, taking the hand of the young lady and conducting her to the door of the cabin, where Mrs. Williamson received her very kindly, and offered her cake and wine.

After an absence of a few minutes, the captain returned. "Oh! what news?" exclaimed Gladys, as he entered the cabin.

"None whatever, my dear lady, except that during the day, yesterday, Mr. Powis was heard several times to express great anxiety to get home early on your account, as he said that you were indisposed in mind and body," replied the captain.

"Oh, dear me! it makes it all the more alarming, that, after all, he should not have gone home at all! Oh, something must have happened to him!" exclaimed Gladys, wringing her hands.

"What is all this about? What has happened, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Williamson, who had not yet heard of the disappearance of Lieutenant Powis.

The captain told her the circumstances, but added cheerfully:

"There is no real cause of alarm."

"Oh, no, certainly not!" chimed in the captain's wife. "You will find it all right. Something or other, not of a painful nature, has happened to detain him a little. That is all."

Poor Gladys looked from one to the other of her companions, trying to believe them and to take comfort from their words.

"Why, even now he may have reached home," said the captain.

"And be waiting anxiously for your return," added the captain's wife.

"Oh! so he may! I will go directly," said Gladys, starting up, all exhausted and trembling as she was, to set out on her return home.

"Stay, my dear madam. You did not ride here, I fear! I saw no carriage on the shore," said the captain, detaining her.

"Oh, no, I walked," replied Gladys.

"Then you are certainly not able to walk back. Stop here with my wife until I send over and have a carriage brought down to the shore to meet you."

Gladys hesitated, feeling her weakness, but being unwilling to wait.

"Do, my dear, take my husband's advice! You are too much worn out to walk back! And even if you were not so, you would not reach home so quickly by walking as by riding," said Mrs. Williamson.

Again Gladys looked from the one to the other in helpless embarrassment, and then, suddenly taking a resolution, she answered:

"Thank you, yes; you are right; I thank you very much indeed."

The captain went out and gave the necessary orders; while Gladys remained with his wife.

In half an hour the carriage was reported to be waiting on the shore, and the boat to be ready near the starboard gangway.

Gladys arose to take leave of Mrs. Williamson. The captain then conducted her from the cabin.

"If my husband should report here before he shows himself at home; or, if you should hear any news of him, will you be so very kind as to send and let me know? I am aware that this is a great thing to ask of you; but I trust in your pity for my great anxiety," said Gladys, as they descended the side of the ship.

"Your trust is well founded, my dear lady. Immediately upon the first news I receive of Mr. Powis, I will send a man to inform you," said the captain, as he handed her carefully into the boat, and arranged her comfortably on her seat.

"Thank you! oh, thank you very much, sir!" said Gladys.

The captain bowed, returned to the deck of his ship, and stood there until the boat was pushed off.

When it reached the shore, Gladys got into the carriage that was waiting for her, gave the proper directions to the driver, and was driven off towards her temporary home.

The roads were good, the horses fresh, the weight light, and so the speed was very rapid.

But to the anxious mind of Gladys the way seemed long. She was beginning to feel very ill. Shivers of cold were succeeded by flushes of heat and fits of fainting; and through all, her head was throbbing violently.

At length the ride came to an end at the little rustic gate leading into the grounds around the old house.

The driver alighted and put down the steps.

Gladys got out, but found that she could scarcely stand or see. She searched her pocket for her purse, to pay the man who stood waiting for his money, but

she could not find it. Then she remembered that she had left it in the bureau drawer.

"Wait here a little while; I will send you the money," she said.

And with reeling brain, and fading sight, and failing limbs, she tottered towards the house, and nearly fell into the arms of Miss Polly, who received her in the porch.

"My dear child! how ill you do look! have you heard any bad news? has anything happened?" said the kind-hearted old lady as she tried to support Gladys, but staggered under her light weight.

Gladys shook her head.

"I have heard nothing satisfactory. And I fear, by your looks, that you have not either. He left the ship at six o'clock last evening, to return home. That is the last his brother officers have seen or heard of him. I had hoped to have found him here. Oh, dear! There, Miss Polly, thank you. I must go upstairs now, and get my purse to pay the carriage. I was obliged to ride home," said the poor girl, gently disengaging herself from the old lady's arms; but immediately, when deprived of that support, sinking upon the bench of the porch.

"Indeed, you shan't go to no up-stairs at all until you have recovered yourself. Where is the man? and how much is it? I will pay him, and then you can settle with me afterwards," said the young lady.

"Thank you, dear Miss Polly. He is at the gate. It is only two shillings. I will return it to you when I go to my room," said Gladys. But her voice came in short, faint jerks, as with a great effort.

The old lady took a little wash leather purse from her own bosom, counted the money that was in it, and set off as fast as her feeble limbs would carry her to the gate.

She paid and dismissed the carriage, and returned to her guest.

Gladys had changed in the little time occupied by Miss Polly's absence; she leaned forward upon the arm of the rustic bench, and her face was white and convulsed, as if in mortal agony.

"Why, my dear child! what is the matter?" inquired Miss Polly, running to her in alarm.

"I don't know! such a pang caught me in the side! and it took away my breath!" gasped Gladys.

"I'll tell you what, you have got the pneumonia from sleeping out in the porch all night! that's what you've got! Now what will Colonel Pollard say!" exclaimed Miss Polly.

Gladys did not attempt to reply. Her face expressed so much suffering that the old lady hastened to say:

"Come in! come right in and go to bed, and we will do what we can for your relief."

Gladys had no alternative. She immediately arose to follow this advice.

Miss Polly drew the young creature's arm within her own, and helped her up the stairs, and into the chamber, and got her to bed.

The old lady's misgivings were well grounded. In a few hours Gladys was extremely ill, and great bodily pain was added to excessive mental anxiety.

The sisters became alarmed, and took the responsibility of summoning their own family physician, Dr. Brown, who, when he saw his patient pronounced her disorder to be typhoid pneumonia, brought on by fatigue, anxiety, and exposure to cold. That night Gladys became delirious, and forgot all her troubles in the wanderings of a disordered imagination.

The next day Captain Williamson came in person to inquire after the lieutenant. But the Misses Crane could give him no information, except that he had not been heard of by them or any one in their house, and that his young wife was lying at the point of death. And the captain went away, full of sorrow, anxiety, and conjecture, to report the case to the police, and to invoke their aid in seeking to discover the fate of the missing man. For many days Gladys hovered between life and death. The three sisters nursed her faithfully, tenderly, and disinterestedly. The old priest came and prayed by her. And the captain sent every few days to inquire how the patient progressed.

And still Arthur Powis did not return.

CHAPTER XL

OMINOUS.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream;
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection. *Shakespeare*

ILLNESS is very expensive. The sisters found it so. Their ready money, advanced without hesitation for the purchase of necessaries for the sick room, was soon expended. And then, as they did not wish to go in debt, they searched for their patient's purse, and

found it. It was such a slender little purse, with such a pitiful little sum of money in it—only a few pieces of silver! The sisters felt that it would be cruel to draw upon that small fund. And smiling and shaking their heads, they put it back. And they borrowed a few pounds from their brother, the priest. And still Arthur Powis did not return.

Some one else came however. It was the ninth day of Gladdy's illness, in the middle of the forenoon. She was lying in a deep sleep that her nurses knew would prove a sleep "of life unto life, or of death unto death;" for this was the highest crisis of her illness; and she must either sink into coma and death, or else awake to full consciousness and life. Miss Milly and Harriet, who had just relieved Miss Polly and Miss Jenny, were sitting, the one on the right side of the bed, and the other on the left, when the sound of wheels was heard, and a carriage stopped at the gate.

Miss Milly arose swiftly, went to the window, pulled aside the curtain, and peeped out.

It was a hackney coach that stood at the gate; and a lady in deep mourning had just alighted from it. She was a tall and stately woman, and she walked slowly and majestically up the avenue leading to the house.

"I suppose Polly and Jenny are a taking a nap after their night-watching; so I had better go down and see who this visitor is, and what she wants," whispered Miss Milly to her confidant of the sick-room. And then she went down-stairs for the expressed purpose.

When Miss Milly opened the door to receive the strange visitor, she also saw that the doctor had just passed through the gate, and was coming up the gravel walk.

"Is this Ceres Cottage?" inquired the lady.

"Yes, ma'am, this is Serious Cottage," answered Miss Milly.

"Where the Miss Cranes live?"

"Yes, ma'am: will you walk in?"

"If you please. Are you Miss Crane?" inquired the lady, as she followed her conductor into the parlour.

"No, ma'am; I am Miss Milly. Will you take a seat?"

"Thank you. You have a young lady boarding here, I believe?" inquired the visitor, as she sank into an easy chair.

"Yes, ma'am, a young married lady; she is lying at death's door at the present moment of time."

What effect this announcement had on the visitor Miss Milly could not know, for just at that moment the doctor quietly entered the room, saying:

"Good morning, Miss Milly. How is my patient?"

"Good morning, doctor. Just the same, sir: just precisely the same, for all that I can see. Will you go up now and look at her?"

"If you please," said the doctor; then bowing to Miss Milly and to the strange lady, he turned to leave the room.

Miss Milly stood hesitating whether to remain with her visitor or to attend the doctor, and then she said:

"If you will please to excuse me, ma'am, I will show Doctor Brown up-stairs."

"No, no, Miss Milly, it is not necessary, I assure you. I suppose there is some one up there with her?" said the doctor.

"Oh, yes, sir; Harriet is there."

"That will do then. You remain with your visitor," said the doctor, leaving the room.

Miss Milly turned to the strange lady, saying:

"Now, ma'am, what might be your wishes?"

"I wish to see the young lady as soon as possible. Is she very ill?"

"At death's door, ma'am, I am sorry to say. Might you be of any kin to the sweet young lady?"

"I am her aunt by marriage, and her guardian by law. What is her illness?"

"Typhoid pneumonia, the doctor says."

"How long has she been ill?"

"Nine days."

"How long has she been with you?"

"Near about three weeks, ma'am."

"She came here in company with a young officer?"

"Her husband, ma'am—yes."

"Umph!" groaned the lady, as if in grief, contempt, and incredulity.

"And, oh, ma'am, what do you think? He is a-missing! But, perhaps, you know that already, and more besides, and have come to tell us news of him?"

"No, I did not know he was missing; but I am not surprised to hear it—not at all; it might have been expected."

"Ma'am!" exclaimed Miss Milly, in amazement.

"This young officer was in the navy, was he not?" inquired the lady, ignoring the exclamation of Miss Milly.

"Yes, I believe he had something to do on board of a ship," answered Miss Milly.

"Yes, of course; it is the same. So he has left her?" sneered the lady.

"Ma'am!" gasped Miss Milly, discrediting her own ears.

"I say, so he has left her already! Well! I thought he would do so; but I did not think he would do it quite so soon."

"Ma'am, he is a-missing! which his friends do fear he is killed!" said Miss Milly.

"Oh, yes, I daresay! Has his body been found?"

"Oh, no, ma'am."

"Then how can you suppose that he has been killed?"

"Why, ma'am, because he doesn't come back, neither to his wife nor to his ship; and he's been a missing ten days, which he suddenly disappeared the very day as the young lady, heaven bless her, was took ill, and which the doctor says how it was one cause of her illness."

"Yes, I have no doubt that this desertion affected her very deeply, though it was just what she might have expected, for such cases as theirs always end in the desertion of the one by the other."

"Lor, ma'am, how can you talk so! He never deserted of her! Why, she was the apple of his eye and the darling of his heart, she was! And of all the young married people as ever I see, them two was the lovingest and the happiest."

"Married?" exclaimed the lady, in bitter scorn.

"Do you really suppose they were married?"

Miss Milly opened her eyes and stared at her visitor—aghast!

"Do you now really think that that boy and girl were married?" repeated the visitor.

"Oh, ma'am, for mercy's sake, don't insinuate as they were not married! don't!" implored Miss Milly, clasping her hands.

"I am sorry to shock you, my good woman; but it is best that the truth should be told—nay, it is absolutely necessary that it should. The young lady in whom you seem to take so much interest—"

"I do; oh, indeed, I really do, ma'am! And so do my sisters, and so does my brother, and so does Harriet—she is our servant. Oh! please don't say anything against the young lady, ma'am," said Miss Milly.

"Whatever I say, or omit to say, will not alter the facts, will it?"

"Well, no, ma'am; I do suppose not."

"Now, then, what I have to say is this: that about a month ago, or something less, this young lady eloped from my house with the young officer whom she calls her husband."

"And who is her husband, ma'am. I would make my affidavit of it with a free conscience," stoutly asserted Miss Milly.

"That is impossible—quite impossible; she is a minor, and cannot legally contract marriage without the consent of her guardian until she is of age. No! she has eloped with this man, whom she cannot legally marry; and it appears that even in this short time he has grown tired of her and deserted her; and I have come very opportunely to rescue her from a life of sin."

"Oh, ma'am, ma'am, how cruel of you to speak in that way of the very innocentest young couple as ever I see in all my life! Just for all the world like two children. I'll never believe ill of them, ma'am—never!" said Miss Milly, shaking her head.

"Do you mean—do you dare to hint that I have slandered them?" sternly demanded the lady.

"Oh dear, no, ma'am! I don't dare to do nothing at all. Only I won't believe no ill of the young couple—no! if I die for not doing of it. So there now!" said Miss Milly, with her aged eyes flashing luridly, like an expiring fire, through her tears.

Before the strange lady could reply to this speech, the door once more opened, and the doctor re-entered the room.

"How is she, doctor? how is the dear young creature?" inquired Miss Milly, wiping her eyes.

"I must answer you as you answered me, using your own words—'she is just the same,'" replied the doctor.

"Will she get over it? Is there any hope?"

"I do not know whether she will get over it. There is hope, of course. A few hours will decide her fate for life or death."

"Can we do anything now, doctor?"

"Very little. I have left full directions with the nurse, who seems to be an intelligent and faithful woman," said the doctor.

"A word with you, if you please, sir," said the visitor, accosting the physician.

"Certainly, madam!" exclaimed the latter in surprise.

"I wish to speak of the unhappy young lady, your patient."

"I am at your service, madam."

"This young lady has been very imprudent, very unfortunate, and, ah! I fear, indeed, very culpable also," said the lady, in a tone of deep feeling.

"Madam!" exclaimed the doctor.

"I never will believe it," interrupted Miss Milly.

"A few words will explain how this matter stands. This young lady is my niece and my ward. About a month ago she eloped from my house with the young officer whom she calls her husband—but falsely calls so, because she is a minor, and cannot legally marry without the consent of her guardian—a consent that has never been given. I, her nearest living relative, as well as her guardian, have come in pursuit of her. I have arrived opportunely, when, as it seems, the unprincipled man who enticed her from her home has deserted her, and left her destitute and among strangers."

"I am very much surprised and grieved at what you have told me, madam," said the doctor, elevating his eyebrows.

"Oh, sir, don't believe it! Please don't believe anything against them dear young folks. If they run away it was for love. And if they're not married, they think they are poor dears! And I know they are, too; and my brother thinks so too; and he is a priest, and he ought to know," said Miss Milly, earnestly.

"This simple, tender-hearted creature has been imposed upon. It is not worth our while to reply to her. What I wished to know is *this*, doctor—whether, if my unhappy young charge should awake to consciousness, it would be safe for me to announce myself to her," said the lady.

"Judging from what you have told me, I should say it would not be safe, madam. Under these unfortunate circumstances, even if she were in good health, your sudden appearance would necessarily be very agitating to her; but in her very critical state, if she were to awake and find you near her, the sight of you might be fatal to her," replied the doctor, coldly.

It was a noticeable fact that all persons now spoke coldly to this lady. There was nothing that she said which might not have been strictly true; there was nothing that she did which might not have been quite right; yet her manner did not inspire confidence; on the contrary, it engendered distrust.

"The life of the young lady is very, very dear to me indeed," she said, "and I shall be very careful how I make my presence known to her. I suppose that while she is in this state of unconsciousness, I might, without danger to her, sit by her and watch?"

"If you would be very careful to note the first indications of a return to consciousness, and retire before she could recognize you," said the doctor.

"I should be sure to do that. And now, Miss Crane," said the visitor, turning to Miss Milly, "as I understand that you take boarders, and as I wish to be on the spot to watch over my niece and ward, I would like to know whether you could accommodate me with a room."

"I will call Jenny; I never do anything without consulting Jenny," said Miss Milly leaving the room. The doctor bowed and took his departure at the same moment.

The visitor, who had been walking slowly up and down the floor, now sat down to wait the entrance of the sisters.

Miss Milly soon returned, bringing in Miss Jenny.

"Jenny," she said, "this lady is Mrs.—Mrs.—Dear me, ma'am! I am sure I beg your pardon, but I have forgot your name! My memory do get very bad."

"I do not know that you ever heard my name; I am sure that I never announced it to you. I am Mrs. Jay Llewellyn, of Cader Idris, in Wales. I am the aunt and guardian of the young lady who boards with you. I also wish to obtain a room and board here, for a few weeks, that I may watch over my unhappy young charge during her illness," said the visitor, addressing both sisters.

"Ee-es," drawled Miss Jenny; "certainly, ma'am, I dare say; but I will call Polly. We never do anything without consulting Polly."

And Miss Jenny left the room, attended by Milly. And soon both returned, bringing in Miss Polly.

"Polly," said Miss Jenny, "this lady is Mrs. Jane Louisa, of some place in Wales—I forget what—"

"I am Mrs. Jay Llewellyn, the guardian of the young lady up-stairs. And I wish to board here to take care of her, if I can be accommodated," said the visitor, curtly.

"Ee-es, certainly, ma'am; but we will call Harriet. We never do anything of importance without consulting Harriet, who is our housekeeper and right hand woman," said Miss Polly, going out, followed by both her sisters.

Mrs. Llewellyn made a gesture of scorn and impatience.

But she had not long to wait.

Soon the aged sisters re-entered, attended by their maid.

"Harriet," said Miss Polly, "this lady is Mrs. James Lewis, the garden of the poor, sick young lady. Come to nurse her. 'Ee-es. Now, I want to know if we can accommodate her comfortably?"

Harriet made a deep curtsy, and then answered: "There's the back room, joining on to young madam's room. I will show that to madam, and she can see if she likes it."

"Do so then, Harriet. Ma'am, if you'll be so good as to walk up-stairs, she will show you the room."

Mrs. Llewellyn arose, drawing her shawl around her, and followed her conductor up-stairs to a spacious, but plainly furnished back-chamber, with one door opening on the passage and another door communicating with the room of Gladys.

Mrs. Llewellyn threw open the back windows that overlooked the garden, poultry yard, and corn fields, and then by the light she turned to examine the room. She was apparently satisfied with it. She turned to Harriet, saying:

"I suppose that you are really the only executive power in this house?"

"The which, ma'am?" respectfully inquired the puzzled woman.

"You are the only business woman?"

"I see to all the young ladies' business; yes, ma'am."

"The young ladies?"

"The Misses Cranes, ma'am, yes, ma'am."

Mrs. Llewellyn looked puzzled in her turn, but was too busy to seek an answer to the riddle. She came at once to the question of board.

"What are the terms?" she inquired.

"Well, ma'am, four pounds a month where a single person takes a large room for herself," said Harriet.

"That will do."

"Just so, ma'am! But now there's another question."

"And what is that?"

"As the young gentleman has gone away without settling for his board or the young lady's board, who is going to settle for it—that's what I want to know," said Harriet, respectfully.

"I shall. From this moment, I assume all the debts, expenses, and responsibilities of this young lady. You may tell your mistress so."

"Yes, ma'am; thankie ma'am; that's very honourable, indeed; I must say it really is."

"That will do. I do not require your approbation. Attend me down-stairs."

The visitor went below, explained to the old ladies that she would like to enter upon her new lodgings that same afternoon, received their courteous acquiescence, and departed to settle her bill at her hotel, and bring her luggage.

After she was gone, the three sisters put their ancient heads together, set their spectacles upon the top of their caps, and discussed the visitor.

They did not, either of them, like her, and they did not know why; her looks, words, and actions were unexceptionable; and so, after comparing notes one with another, the three good creatures decided that they themselves were in fault, being unjust and prejudiced; and that Mrs. James Lewis must be altogether in the right.

(To be continued.)

THE progress of railway travelling has been advanced a step by a new arrangement, which enables the traveller so minded to go from Plymouth to London and back in one day. The first of the proposed three up express trains will start from Plymouth at 8.30 in the morning, and will reach London at 3. One of the three down express trains will leave London at 4.50, and arrive at Plymouth at 11.55 at night. Thus, in one day, by this admirable travelling, a person will be enabled to go from Plymouth to London and back; but we should say, smooth though the broad-gauge travelling is, he would not be a little fatigued by so immense a journey. From Plymouth to London is about 250 miles—up and down 500 miles; which, done in a day, with time for business transactions, is without doubt a great feat. It was a great affair formerly to make journeys of two or three hundred miles; arrangements were made long beforehand, and the guests stayed long after they got there. But now a-days they slip in and off without ceremony, and the only place where the old state of things perfectly exists is in a county like Cornwall, too rough for railways—at least for many.

A NOBLE MECHANIC.—The Earl of Rosse is the Tubal Cain of the Irish Peasage—a noble Vulcan, a smith, and an astronomer—equally at home in the forge or among the stars. Most people have heard of his lordship; they have heard of his great telescope, fifty-three feet long and six feet in diameter, through which the celebrated nebula of Sir John Herschel was first seen in its most distinct aspect of myriad clustering stars. The earl's residence, Rosse Castle, is a most amusing mixture of the forge and the feudal fortress. The greater part of the structure is comparatively new, but portions of the old castle, which in the Jacobite wars stood a brief siege, still remain, and bear

upon them the traces of cannon-balls. The present nobleman has surrounded the building with a rampart and fosse, so that in a sudden emergency it might be turned to strategical account. Fortification is one of the many branches of knowledge to which he has turned his thoughts; but when you get within the line of defence, what a contrast to baronial or military force the objects that meet your eye afford! The genius of Watt triumphs over the imitations of Vauban. Where cannon might have bristled, a tidy steam engine worked; great lathes turned under the towers that frowned defiance at James's forces. In the stables, where racing stud or war steed might have been sheltered, a most ingenious and powerful apparatus for polishing the great speculum was fixed. In the corner of the castle-yard was a furnace, and close by stood the moulds in which the monster reflectors were cast by his lordship, with face and hands begrimed with sweat and coal-dust—an event more important, but not as worthily recorded, as the casting of Schiller's bell. Scraps of iron and smiths' coal strewn the ground; and instead of the baying of hound or the bourn of hunter, you hear the sustained deep breathing of a pair of forge bellows, above which rings the measured sledge and clang of anvil, for his lordship is never idle.

THE FISHER-BOY OF NAPOLI.

CHAPTER I.

THE last rays of a summer's sun were slanting across the blue Archipelago, studded with lovely green islands, and tinging the hills, valleys, cities, and hamlets of the Moors with a warm, rosy glow. The wing of the wild bird was folded in her nest; the labours of the vine-dressers were ended; and the fishermen, returning from their day's toils upon the sea, sung low, musical Greek songs, whose echoes floated over the waves till they died away into faintest cadences of sound upon the twilight air.

In the outskirts of the city of Napoli—where the smooth, shining beach was laved by the blue waters of the Gulf—a youth, scarce more than sixteen summers old, drew up a small boat upon the sands, and gazed around with expectant air, as though in eager haste to meet some one at a rendezvous. The lad was clad in humble fisher's garb, but his mien was proud as a young prince's; and his dark eyes, high brow, and handsome full lips bespoke a nature replete with spirit, fire, and passionate energy.

But Conrad, the fisher-boy of Napoli, might boast greater grace or courage than any titled young scion in the land, yet he could never hope to aspire to rank or station; for he was a nameless waif, cast up by the treacherous sea from a wreck that had come ashore some twelve years previous, and had been adopted into the family of old Pietro, an honest, but lowly fisherman of the coast, who had bred the boy to his own calling.

But, despite his rude occupation and poor advantages, the lad had grown up far handsomer and more graceful than many young Greek nobles; and had managed, by dint of hard labour at his books, during intervals between his toils, to gather such knowledge as those far more favoured ones had failed to cull from the schools. Therefore it was that Conrad became a sort of ruler among the youth of his own class, and was respected by the old fishermen of the Gulf; while many a young lord, in finer robes, envied the easy grace and handsome figure which the rough attire of the fisher-boy could not conceal.

But to return to Conrad, as, in the deepening purple twilight, he turned from his boat at her moorings, and eagerly paced to and fro on the silvery sand just below the low, vine-wreathed wall of a garden which sloped down to the very edge of the beach.

The fisher-boy's steps were impetuous; and his dark eyes were bent toward the garden, centering upon a spot in the wall where a small white gate, half-concealed by creeping ivy, rich with blossoms, opened from the pleasure-grounds upon the shore. Beyond, almost hidden by the wilderness of dark green shrubs and trees, rose the white walls of a stately villa—the summer seat of Romaina Milonghi, the governor of Napoli, and the proscribed of the old Greek race.

What errand had Conrad, the humble fisher-boy of the Gulf, in that twilight hour, to any member of the great man's household?

For minutes, the lad paced the smooth beach, his foot growing more restless, and his eye more impatient; till, just as a shade of disappointment was beginning to cloud his features, the little white gate in the garden wall noiselessly opened, and from among the hanging vines emerged the slender form of a young and beautiful Greek girl, clad in the costume of her race.

"Medora!" escaped the fisher boy's lips; and in another instant he was at her side, and had gracefully doffed his cap, bending on one knee to salute her fair

white hand. Then, rising to his feet, he said eagerly: "I had begun to despair of your coming, and the twilight was black as midnight without my evening star."

The young girl smiled and blushed, but answered sweetly:

"Does Conrad never mean to learn the lesson of patience? Thou knowest I have oft told thee that I must watch for these moments when I may slip away from observing eyes, and steal to meet thee on the shore. But to-night, I own 'twas harder than ever before; for my sire had never so much leisure to bestow upon me, and insisted upon one song after another as we sat together in the dusk. But, at last, he fell into a light slumber, when I stole away. Ah, dear Conrad, I would that thou wert other than thou art, or I of humbler birth; and then there were no need of these stolen meetings!" And Medora sighed as she uttered this wish.

"Thou canst not desire that more than I!" replied Conrad, his dark eyes flashing and his proud lips working nervously. "And oh! I realize how mad, how vain, how presumptuous, is the love of the humble fisher-boy for the governor's beautiful daughter; and then, my thoughts make me wild. Medora, were your father, the proud Romaina Milonghi, to even dream of my daring, I would find no punishment too great for me. Why was I not born of equal rank with the perfumed lords who come and go at courts at their will, and each one of whom is free to worship you in your father's presence? 'Tis unjust! unequal! wicked, Medora!" and his eyes kindled with fire, and his nostrils quivered.

"Hast thee, Conrad! Thou art in a most discontented mood to-night, since my excuse for my tardy coming has set thee out like this!" said the maiden soothingly, laying her hand on his arm. "Come, let us walk along the shore by this beautiful summer sea, and thou shalt tell me of thy day's success upon the waters."

But Conrad, the fisher-boy, was in a wayward mood that eve. High, ambitious thoughts were surging through his brain; and the words of his companion only swelled the sea of discontent to further overflow. He spoke impetuously, his lip curling with scorn, and his dark eyes flashing.

"My day's success upon the waters!" What charm can it possess for the ears of Governor Milonghi's daughter—how many fish Conrad, the fisher-boy, has caught to-day—or what few coin they may fetch at the market-town? I tell thee, Medora, we are no longer children, to be contented—I, with toiling at my net all day, with old father Pietro, and thou to sing thy Greek songs to thy sire, and then we two to steal hither in the twilight, to spend an hour upon these lonely sands, or sail in my little boat upon the Gulf. This life cannot last; thy sire will wed thee to a sister of thine own rank; he would spit upon me with contempt did I dare even tell my love for thee; and then he will tear thee from me for ever!"

"Dear Conrad, I will love none other—I will wed none in Napoli, save thee!" said Medora, fervently. "Let us not think farther of these things to-night! Thou art excited; let me soothe and comfort thee." And she gently laid her white hand upon his arm.

"Nay, Medora; I cannot put the future from me blindly! I would to the gods I were the humblest soldier in your sire's guard, or in that army he is gathering to repel the invasion of the Turk! Anything or aught, save this fisher-boy from out whose ranks I cannot rise," he said bitterly. "I will forsake these, and try my fortune with the sword!"

"But you know, dear Conrad, that you are more learned now than any of thy class, and many of our young men of the city envy your skill in writing. Would it not be a happy chance if I could procure you the situation of my father's secretary?" cried Medora eagerly. "I will try my utmost; and then, you know, dear Conrad, that one step would lead to another, until—"

"Until I might be bold enough to ask for your hand," interrupted the youth. "Your words inspire me with hope, Medora, angel of my soul! That, indeed, were better than tarnishing soldier—at least, I should be nearer you, and meet you openly, day by day, instead of stealing here like a thief, under cover of evening shades. I will throw off this lowly life, and rise from the condition of a poor fisher-boy. See, Medora, and now all the hope of the youth was infused into the boy's rapid tones, "this charm, ah! what!—whatever it be—that old Pietro found upon my neck, when he took me, a four-year old babe, from the desolate sea-shore; and he drew from beneath his rude fisher's vest a small silver circlet, gemmed with stones that flashed and scintillated in the twilight—"this little memento of my former state tells me that I am of better birth than those with whom I mingle, and nerves me with strong hopes for my future. I have always worn it upon my breast—I will never part with it, and it may yet prove my guide to home and rank!" and he religiously kissed the ornament.

"Conrad, it is the crescent! a silver crescent, set with diamonds!" exclaimed the Greek girl, suddenly starting, as she bestowed a long, eager gaze upon the amulet. "Do you know what that denotes, my Conrad? You are of Turkish birth! You are no Greek! And, oh! I am so sad, so sorry for this!"—and her voice grew mournful as the tones of a wind-harp swept by a sighing gale—"for you belong to those enemies who are, even now, endeavouring to enslave fair Greece, and bring ruin and desolation within her borders."

"Fear nothing, my own Medora," replied the youth, his eyes flashing and his nostrils dilating, even while his words grew tenderer with love. "Greek, Christian, or Mussulman, thou canst never cease to be the nymph of my dreams, the guiding star of my destiny, the angel of my paradise! Forgive me, if it sound harsh, when I say 'I would be greater joy to my heart to know that I were the cherished son of some fond old Turkish sire than the stray waif adopted by old Pietro (whom the gods bless for his kindness to me). I would I knew really the mystery of my birth, yet not likely that I will ever come round. At present, I can but try and lift myself from my humble lot, and endeavour to approach nearer thee. Dost think thy sire will really accept me as his secretary, Medora?"

"When slaves are on an equality with their masters, for dogs sit at their tables instead of licking the crumbs from their hands, O traitor," came in an infuriated voice—and Conrad turned to behold the presence that struck terror to his heart—the angry, yet majestic governor, Romsinal Milonghi—"then, and only then, will a nameless fisher-boy aspire to the hand of my daughter! This is the secret of thy restless mien when alone with thy sire—of thy haste to be rid of his company!" he cried sternly to the trembling girl, whom he had grasped by the arm. "Get thee hence, to thy chamber, where a strict guard shall be set over thee! And for thee, presumptuous catfish, the dungeon cell, and public disgrace, if thou ever dare again turn thy low-born eyes upon the daughter of the governor of Napoli! Now, back to thy fishing and thy equals!" And, leading the trembling Medora by the arm, the increased nobleman stalked away with haughty tread.

The lad stood where he was left, alone, pale as death under the governor's insult, and with dangerous fires flashing in his dark eyes.

All his visions of winning Medora were laid low at one fell blast. They were as widely divided now, by that noble's fiat, as though the world lay between them. And, on the morrow, the knowledge of his presumption would be bruited abroad, from the noble's palace to the humblest cot by the sea. Should he stay to hear the story of his disgrace, through the taunting lips of some envious fisher-youth of his class, or the sneering jeers of some insulting young Napoli cavalier?

His decision was read in his firmly-shut lips; and, stooping down, to pick up a gleaming white ribbon from the sand—the ash that had fallen from Medora's slender waist, as her father dragged her away—he pressed it to his lips, thrust it into his vest, and, springing into his boat, rowed rapidly over the darkling waters.

Next morn, old Pietro missed the ringing voice of his foster-son in answer to his call; and never again, in his light boat, darting out from the shelter of the cove, or flinging his line to the waters, was seen Conrad, the bold, handsome fisher-boy of the Gulf.

CHAPTER II.

The flight of time seems ever more rapid in those soft southern climes, where the skies bend always blue, and no storms of winter linger, to chill the air or make the weary eye long for the dissolving touch of gentle spring; and thus, like a long, bright dream, four years had circled rapidly over the beautiful, classic land of Greece.

It was the fourth summer after the scenes portrayed in the opening chapter of our story; and neither upon the white-walled villa, amid its vines and ilex trees, upon the garden sloping to the white beach, nor upon the blue waters of the Gulf, had the hand of change dropped her tributary, save to add beauty, fragrance, and music to garden, shore, and laughing wave that kissed the strand.

By day, the sky bent as deeply blue over the lovely land of Greece; and, by night, the stars kept watch over vale, grove, and mount, dedicated in olden time to nymph, fawn, and mythic god, and thenceforth shined for ever in classic story.

And yet, though unseen in the bright, transcendent atmosphere, and unred in the babbling voices of laughing waves along the silver beach, a dark cloud was hovering over the doomed Morea, and a low voice was uttering presages of coming woe.

War—crimson-handed, black-visaged war—was stalking onward, to sweep down upon the fair land, and gather spoils to his rich stores.

The grand army of the Turks, under sway of the Great Vizier, had swarmed to their war-vessels; and the fleet had sailed, to plant the crescent of the Moslem on the land of the Christian Greek.

Events followed rapidly after the first trumpet notes of the contest began. The siege of Corinth commenced; and then, after the downfall of that city, the victorious tide of battle surged onward to Napoli, the beautiful city that sat like a queen, enthroned by the waters of her blue Gulf. And now, came fear and trembling to the citizens of Napoli—a stirring of the Greek forces, the gathering of the army—and proclamations from the hand of Romsinal Milonghi for the strengthening of the defences of the beautiful city by the sea.

Amid all his anxieties for the defence of Napoli, the governor had ever found time to devote to his daughter—now, as of old, the apple of his eye, and the fairest flower in the Grecian city of her nativity. The four years that had sped since her sudden parting with the humble lover of her girlhood had only ripened the young Medora into rich womanhood. Eighteen summers had dowered her with the most exquisite beauty of her race—the low, full brow, the delicately-rounded cheek, the soft, lustrous eyes, silken, dark hair, and such a figure as might have served the best sculptor of her clime for his most perfect model.

Many suitors had vainly sought her favour; to one and all she had always returned the same kind, womanly friendship or courtesy; till the nobles of Napoli said, among themselves—"Our governor's beautiful daughter is like some vestal priestess of old, dedicated to the duties alone!"

None knew that, underneath her smooth brow, and evenly-pulsing heart, slept a memory of a dark-browed, flashing-eyed boy, who oft of old, had wandered beside her up and down the smooth sea-beach in the purple twilight hour, or guided his boat, wherein they two sat, beneath the starlight sky across the darkling waters. Conrad, the fisher-boy, ne'er heard of since that last cruel eve of separation, was not forgotten.

But now, along with war's troubles, came another anxiety to the minds of the governor of Napoli and his daughter. Marco Ypsilanti, lord of a powerful section of country adjoining Napoli, had fallen violently in love with the beautiful Medora; and now preferred his suit, with promises of powerful allies to her sire if she made favourable answer.

Milonghi was ambitious as proud, and his first desire was in favour of his daughter's acceptance of Ypsilanti. But Medora, usually most gentle and filial, was firm in her resistance, and had once, twice, returned denial to the lover's proposal—an answer which failed to be regarded as final by Ypsilanti, for again he pressed his suit.

Medora was sitting in her own apartment one day, when her father entered, and, sending away the maid, who was busy at some duty near her mistress, he again urged an acceptance of the noble's hand.

The maiden had never looked lovelier, at the most brilliant festa of her father's court, than on that morning. Her costume was a skirt of emerald satin, under a vest of violet velvet, starred and embroidered in gold; her throat and bust was covered by a network of pearls, and bracelets encircled her rounded arms; the small fessi cap of her country, bordered with gold zechins, crowned her lustrous, purple-black hair; and sandals of velvet, embroidered with golden thread, encased her delicately-arched feet. Of a truth, Marco Ypsilanti might well be pardoned his desire to win so beautiful a Greek maiden.

"I have but sought thee with the same request I have twice ere now laid before thee," began the governor. "Ypsilanti has, for the third time, renewed his suit, my daughter."

"And I have found no cause for changing my decision," replied Medora, firmly. "Methinks Ypsilanti is more bold than delicate, in thus entreating what hath twice been denied him! I cannot wed him, my sire."

"But, Medora,"—and Milonghi's voice was sterner now—"this is no light matter. Thou art refusing a great and powerful lord for a girl's whim. Dost remember that he has promised a legion of brave soldiers to our aid if thou acceptest him? and heaven knows we need them sorely enough at this critical time, when the perfidious Turk is pressing down upon us with his hordes, and driving all before his sway! Bash girl, wilt thou tempt the doom of fated Corinth for our beautiful city? Shall the crescent float over the cross—and the Greek bow the knee to the Moslem? Consider, I pray you, whether a girl's No! shall tempt the destruction of our fair Napoli? Whether thou wilt devote thy sire, and legions of brave soldiers, and our peaceful citizens, to death, at the hands of our captors?"

Like a stern judge, Milonghi appealed to his daughter; and at first she trembled, and shrank away from his denunciations.

Then, after a long pause, she spoke with death white lips:

"My sire, not for love of this rude wooer do I yield, but to avert the doom of bloodshed and slavery from Napoli. When the city is free, then will I become the bride of Ypsilanti."

The stern features of the governor softened, and he stooped and imprinted a kiss upon his daughter's pale forehead.

"A thousand thanks, Medora, for thy words. I hasten to acquaint the Lord Ypsilanti with his success. Thou hast lifted a load from my heart, for the Turk is at our very gates, led on by the bold Achmet—a young warrior whose fame rings next to that of the dread Ali Koumourgi himself, and who is idolized by the army he commands. But, with Ypsilanti's legions, we will drive back this youthful braggart, and Greece shall be herself again!"

The next moment Medora was alone; but pen cannot portray the contending thoughts that struggled in her breast.

Turn we now to the army whose victorious forces were approaching Napoli.

Many days had not passed before the Turkish legions were drawn up in array to commence the attack.

Achmet, their leader, was a young prince who had suddenly carved out for himself distinction and glory. His arm was daring in its sweep—his voice was clarion in its call—his eye was bold and flashing as the mountain eagle's. He was the idol of his soldiers, and victory followed his banners.

Achmet rode a powerful black horse, with all the untamed fire and freedom of his native desert in his veins; he wore the loose uniform of the Turkish general, and from his turban floated a long, green plume, fastened by a silver crescent, set with sparkling gems.

His right hand wielded a keen-bladed Turkish scimitar; and from his left arm hung a thickly-embossed shield.

With his hand upon his horse's bridle-rein, Achmet dashed forward at the head of his legions.

To portray the wild battle-shock—the thunderings of the siege against the devoted city's walls—the stout resistance of the Greeks—the final victory of the impetuous foe, and the despair of the vanquished—would require abler pen than mine; it was fated that the Moslem power should again be in the ascendant, and that the crescent should banish the cross from the Morea.

Medora sat in her chamber of the governor's palace, when the flying feet of soldiery in the streets below, and the rush of her own servants along the galleries of the villa, roused her from the deep reverie into which she had fallen.

She lifted her head, and a shudder crept through her veins; for with the tramping of those armed men her first thought was:

"The battle is over—the foe is driven—our soldiers are pressing jubilantly into the public squares—and the hated Ypsilanti will soon appear, to claim me for his bride!"

But the door was now flung open, and Leila, her maid, who had been below, cried in terror:

"We are lost, Lady Medora! The dreaded infidel has taken the city, and our brave soldiers are driven before the sword! Ah, sweet lady, it may be our turn next, for they say the terrible Achmet is coming direct toward the governor's palace!" And the terrified girl wrung her hands in terror.

Strange to say, a sudden thrill of joy ran through Medora's whole being when she heard the exclamations of poor Leila—but, in an instant, the thought that this was treason recalled her to herself. She rose, and with the inquiry—"Where is my father?" proceeded to the lowest rooms of the palace.

But hardly had she reached the open court before a great cry rose on the air.

"Achmet, the Turk! Achmet, the Turk!" circled from lip to lip; and in another instant a jet-black war-horse dashed up to the columned portico—a slender, yet elegant figure sprang to the marble pavement—the Turk advanced, and, bowing his turbaned head till his emerald plume almost brushed the hem of Medora's robe, said, in deep tones:

"Lady Medora, I crave private audience with thyself and thy sire!"

Wondering greatly how the conqueror knew her name, yet thrilled with unaccountable agitation, Medora was about to reply that she knew not whether her father had escaped the perils of the day, when, at that moment, the governor entered, guarded by a squad of Turkish soldiery.

"Release the governor of Napoli!" thundered Achmet; then he repeated his request for a private interview, and, shortly, the trio stood in an audience-room in the palace.

"Speak, Turk! I am thy slave," said Milonghi, bitterly, his Greek blood boiling like fire within his veins.

"Nay, Romsinal Milonghi—I am no conqueror come to return evil for evil! Four years ago, an humble

fisher-boy, fired by your insults, fled this land, and guided by Allah, through this silver crescent-talisman of his house"—touching the diamond studded amulet that fastened the green plume in his turban—"was restored to the arms of the sire who for years had mourned his son as drowned in the blue sea. Prince Achmet Benon comes hither only to prove his friendship. 'Tis true he cannot offer liberty to all Greece, for mightier than he sits on the throne of the Osman; but he offereth freedom to the governor of Napoli, and the rank of princess to his daughter. What says thy heart, Medora?" And, dropping his formal tone, he turned suddenly, fondly, to the wonder-stricken maiden.

With deepest surprise, Medora stood, as if transfixed, gazing upon the countenance of her lover. But suddenly the calm was broken, and she sprang forward, answering, with a blush:

"Prince Achmet can be no dearer than was Conrad, the fisher-boy!"

"Thou hearest, Romaini Milonghi. Wilt withhold, or grant, thy consent to our espousals?" asked Achmet, turning to the Greek.

The governor replied by stepping forward, and placing his daughter's white hand in the young Turkish conqueror's; he then turned away, to hide the tears wrung from his proud, humiliated heart, by this generous revenge of Achmet.

Ere many days had sped, there was a marriage in the old city by the sea; and among the jewels which the Prince Achmet presented to his fair bride was a magnificent coronet, in the centre of which was the diamond-studded crescent of silver—the talismanic relic which had guided to home and country "Conrad, the fisher-boy of Napoli."

C. H. M.

DEDICATED TO PAT FOR HIS COMFORT.—People are very much startled at the discovery which Dr. E. Smith has made, that the English working classes are, on the whole, worse fed than those of either Ireland or Scotland, and that the Irish are the best off of the three in respect to nutritious diet. It was only the other day that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was quoting, with approval of their truth, the poet's lines—

"Poor Paddy, of all Christian men, I think,
On basest food pours down the vilest drink."

It may be so as to drink; but if Dr. Smith is right Paddy should be the envy of John Bull as to food. The scientific calculation is that a man ought to have on the average 28,600 grains of carbon, and 1,380 grains of nitrogen per diem. Of the various classes whose condition was investigated, few indoor operatives get enough of nitrogen, and a fifth of all agricultural labourers are deficient in their supply of carbon. In Berkshire (the Royal county, studded with palaces and mansions) the people have not enough of either kind, and must therefore be in a chronic state of slow starvation. In Ireland, in the large amount of butter and cheese which enters into their diet, the Irish are said to receive the requisite amount of the two essential elements of nutrition; and the Scotch also are better off than the English, on account of the use of milk, oatmeal, and "braxy mutton."

"One day—so goes this popular tradition—as Sir Alexander Murray was strolling down the avenue, he saw the Laird of Haystoun, mounted on his white pony, approaching, as if with the intention of visiting Drara Hall. After the usual greetings, Murray asked Haystoun if that was his intention. 'Deed, it's just that,' quoth Haystoun, 'and I'll tell you my errand. I am gaun to court your daughter Jean.' The Laird of Blackburny (who, for a reason that will afterwards appear, was not willing that his neighbour should pay his visit at that particular time) gave the thing the go-by, by saying that his daughter was over young for the laird. 'E'en's you like,' quoth Haystoun, who was somewhat darty, and who thereupon took an unceremonious leave of Blackburny, hinting that his visit would perhaps be more acceptable somewhere else. Blackburny went home, and immediately told his wife what had passed. Her ladyship on a moment's reflection, seeing the advantage that was likely to be lost in the establishment of her daughter, and to whom the despatch of years was no objection, immediately exclaimed: 'Are you daft, laird? Gang awa' immediately, and call Haystoun back again.' On this, the laird observed—(and this turned out the cogent reason for his having declined Haystoun's visit)—'Ye ken Jean's shoon's at the mending.' (For the misses of those days had but one pair, and these good substantial ones, which would make a strange figure in a drawing-room of the present day.) 'Ye ken Jean's shoon's at the mending.' 'Hoot awa'! 'tis nonsense,' says her ladyship; 'I'll gie her mine.' 'And what will ye do yourself?' 'Do?' says the lady: 'I'll put on your boots; I've lang petticoats, and they will never be noticed. Rin and cry back the laird.' Blackburny was at once convinced by the

reasoning and ingenuity of his wife; and as Haystoun's pony was none of the fleetest, Blackburny had little difficulty in overtaking him, and persuading him to return again. The laird having really conceived an affection for his neighbour's daughter, the visit was paid. Jean was introduced in her mother's shoes; the boots were never noticed; and the wedding took place in due time, and was celebrated with all the mirth and jollity usually displayed on such occasions. The union turned out happily, and from it, as has been said, sprung the present family of Haystoun."—*"A History of Peeblesshire."* By William Chambers.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jewit," "The Prelate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER CIX.

THE police, clearly perceiving that the first intentions of the sailors had been hostile, would have included them with their prisoners; but if English seamen are nimble as cats on board, they are slippery as eels on shore. With a shout of defiance they disappeared, and the next minute the gates of the prison closed upon the two friends.

Our readers may imagine the indignation of Dick and Fred when informed that the charge against them was nothing less than one of robbery and assault upon the august person of Don José de Almina, the alcade of Rio. A carriage returning to the city had unfortunately relieved the inescapable Don from the dilemma in which he found himself; and his first step towards revenge was to issue an order for the arrest of the culprits. The governor of the prison opened his ponderous register, to inscribe them, before they were conducted to the common receptacle of felons, murderers, and villains.

"Your name?" he said.

"Frederick Vernon!" answered Fred, in a careless tone.

"Occupation?"

"Lieutenant in the service of his Britannic Majesty. At present serving in the *Revenge*, now lying in the harbour."

The official peered at him for a moment over his spectacles—then finished writing his description.

"And yours?" he said, addressing his companion.

"Dick Vernon—*midshipman on full pay*, in the same service! Now translate it word for word," said Dick, addressing his companion.

"And this is a true description?" observed the governor, when he had finished.

"Of course it is!" exclaimed Fred, indignantly.

"Do you take us for Spaniards or Portuguese, old fellow?"

"Well!" said the official, with a grin, "I trust it is. If not, look to it."

"And do you look to it!" replied the Lieutenant; "for I shall hold both you and the old rascal of an alcade responsible for this treatment of myself and friend. As for the charge of robbery, it is ridiculous. We rescued a young lady from his hands, whom he had forced from the house of her guardian, the English consul! Our ship is in the harbour. Look to it," he added; "you, as well as your employer, will have an awkward account to settle."

As the relationship between Don José and Miss Hamilton, as well as the designs of the former upon the fortune of the young lady, were perfectly well-known to the governor, he felt that it would be most prudent to depart in some degree from the order he had received—to thrust them into the most loathsome dungeon in the prison.

On an intimation that they were willing to pay for the accommodation, he permitted them to remain on the debtors' side of the prison, and even carried his condescension so far as to supply them with a supper and wine from his own table, at the moderate charge of two ounces per head—a little more than seven pence.

It must be taken into consideration that, although provisions were remarkably cheap in the markets of Rio, they were invariably dear within the prison.

In the long room into which they were shown, about twenty prisoners were collected—several of them in the picturesque costume of Mexican gentlemen. The varied physiognomies of the party would have afforded an interesting study for Lavater. Upon the features of some the storm of passion had left its fearful traces: others were stamped with an expression of cunning and ferocious cruelty. Most of them were smoking and playing at cards.

One captive—a tall, thin, gentlemanly-looking man, whose head appeared white with sorrow rather than with age—attracted their attention. He was seated in one corner of the room, wrapped in a faded dressing-gown, and seemed deaf to the din around him—heedless alike of the dissipation and misery of the place

The two friends gazed upon the scene for some moments in silence. The impression it produced was a painful one.

"Dick," said the lieutenant.

"Well?"

"It wasn't a bad idea of yours to send Jack to the consul's. The worst berth on board the *Revenge* is a Paradise to this infernal den!"

At the sound of his voice, the old man whose appearance we have described started, and he tottered rather than walked towards them.

"You are English?" he said. "It is long—very long—since I heard the accents of my native tongue; but I have not forgotten it!"

"We are English," replied both the young men, holding out their hands to him—for his appearance, manner, and the violent agitation he laboured under, deeply interested them.

"And so am I!" said the prisoner. "I have survived wife, child, friends, fortune—even my enemies; but my country still remains to me. They can't deprive me of that—not of that!"

"I should think not!" exclaimed Dick, in a tone of indignation at the supposition of such an impossibility. "How long have you been in this wretched place?"

The countryman regarded him for an instant, as if endeavouring to comprehend the question.

"How long!" he repeated. "Let me see—years—and years again—and years added to that! I can't reckon by time: it appears ages—ages!"

"Have you no friends?" asked Fred, in a sympathizing tone.

"Friends!" said the old man, with a sigh; "no! Gone—all gone! Even death has forgotten me!"

"At least you have a name?"

"I had—I had a name; but it is so long since I heard it, that I have almost forgotten! Stay—yes!" he added, with a gleam of recollection; "*Stanley—George Stanley*. You see the wreck they have made me!"

The captive turned aside, to hide the tears which chased each other down his thin, pale cheeks.

CHAPTER CX.

Man is a child of sorrow, and this world
In which we breathe has care enough to plague us,
But it hath means within to soothe these cares;
And he who meditates on others' woes
Shall in that meditation lose his own.

Cumturi.

It is the last drop which makes the cup run over. The touch of sympathy will wake the cold mute to ruder hands. The kindness and deep feeling evinced by the young Englishmen to the unhappy husband of Clara Briancourt broke the seal of silence so long imposed upon his sorrows, and the pent-up waters flowed afresh.

During the many years he had spent in the prison of Rio, he had encountered nothing but the brutal jests, the heartless mockeries, and fierce oaths of the herd of wretches by whom he has surrounded, till at length his crushed soul had taken refuge in that sullen apathy which hides the wound, not heals it.

"Why are you here?" inquired Dick, with sailor-like frankness; "I feel assured you have not committed any crime."

"Crime!" repeated the old man, in a tone of bitterness; "you judge with the confidence of your age—in ignorance of the world and its harsh law! My crime was the heaviest man could be charged with—a crime," he added, "which palsies the energy of manhood—reduces genius to ashes—glides like a spectre between love and the object of its choice—draws an impassable circle round the garden of life—condemning the guilty wretch to its briars and deserts!"

"Murder?" faltered Fred, with a look of horror.

"Worse—much worse!" said Mr. Stanley.

"Worse!" exclaimed both the young men.

"Poverty!" continued the prisoner; "the only crime which earth knows or punishes with unrelenting hate—all other ills are called misfortunes! Murder! Pah! There is sympathy for the murderer—justice may be hoodwinked—bribed—even the Angel of Mercy will oftentimes plead for him: her voice is dumb for poverty alone."

What a martyrdom of suffering did these brief words imply—a blight which had fallen upon the heart, and scathed it.

Bitter as was the explanation, it was a relief both to Fred and Dick to find that the being in whose misfortunes they had taken so sudden and deep an interest was guilty of no worse crime than being poor.

"Your tale must be a sad one," observed the Lieutenant.

"So sad," said Mr. Stanley, "it might have drawn iron tears from the stern eyes of Destiny! Shall I tell you all that I have endured? It is not often that I am garrulous—but there is something in your youth and words which inspires confidence! The world," he added, "has not hardened you yet!"

"I was young," he continued; "I cannot tell how many years have elapsed since my hair was of the same raven hue as yours, and my heart beat high with energy and hope; but it seems ages—ages! I loved and won the love of a fair girl—one of those rare beings which at intervals appear on earth to convince mankind that Eden was something more than a tradition! You may well gaze upon me!" he added, with a sigh; "is it not strange to think that the withered, decrepit being before you was ever gazed upon with eyes of affection—that his ears ever heard from the lips of beauty the avowal of a passion pure as the breath which uttered it? Believe or doubt it, as you will—but it was so!"

His listeners assured him that it required no great stretch of credulity to give faith to his assertion.

"She whom I loved was rich," resumed the old man; "my sin, I have told you, was poverty! Her mother hated me—why, I never could divine—for my name was ancient as her own! She was a proud, passionate woman—a worshipper of the world—and doubtless looked with contempt upon the herald's blazoned coat of arms, when the possessor's body-coat was threadbare! Despite her menaces, Clara and I were married! Her vengeance and her curse alike pursued us!"

Overcome by his recollections, the speaker paused and pressed his hand to his forehead, to veil his emotion—perhaps to hide a tear. Neither Fred nor his companion broke the silence which ensued. They felt that sympathy at such a moment would sound like mockery.

"I thought I had been transformed to stone—stone!" muttered the prisoner, bitterly; "but find some portion still is human!"

"We were steeped to the neck in poverty," he added; "yet, strange to say, were happy—happy in our love—happy in each other! My young wife at last became a mother—presented me with an image of herself—a tender, helpless girl!"

"The birth of my child awoke me from my dream of life. I felt for the first time the necessity of exertion, and I resolved to meet the spectre reality face to face! I was a ripe scholar, and I offered to teach—none would employ me! Men feared to trust their sons to a tutor in a threadbare coat, lest poverty should prove infectious! I wrote a book—a poem—I scarce remember the subject. The publishers smiled when I offered it for sale. I solicited employment—labour—anything; my prayer was rejected! I had none to recommend me—the fact of my being a scholar and a gentleman told against me!"

"Is it possible?" said Dick, deeply moved; "is the world so hard?"

"So selfish?" added Fred.

George Stanley looked at them for an instant with surprise, as if he fancied that they were mocking him. He could not comprehend a doubt so utterly at variance with his own experience.

"Is it hard—is it selfish?" he repeated; "it is like the mountain whose tall crest shadows the plain beyond the city! The surface is soft enough, but the heart—the heart is granite! At last," added the speaker, "I found a friend!"

"You were fortunate!"

"Ay, as the child who finds a viper, and hides it in his bosom!" said the old man. "In my blindness, I trusted him—for his hairs were white with age, and his words were those of kindness. From time to time he assisted me, and finally proposed a situation in the house of a relative, as he said, in Rio. He supplied me with the means of reaching it, promising at the same time to guard my wife and child from want, till by my industry I had acquired sufficient money to send for them. The rest is soon told. I had not been in this accursed city more than three months, when a letter arrived from the clergyman of the village where I had left them, informing me they were both dead—of fever! Fever!" he repeated, with a laugh; "the fever of starvation!"

"For weeks I was a maniac. When I recovered, I had but one wish—one thought: to return to England—to visit their graves—to sit by the low, grassy mound, and die by their side. I informed my employer of my intention—then it was I discovered the artful snare by which I had been betrayed! He produced the acceptance I had given my friend for the sum advanced for my outfit and passage, arrested me upon it, and—I am here—here! You know all."

"The monster!" exclaimed both the young sailors, indignantly.

"The world is peopled with them!" observed the prisoner, with forced calmness. "They thrive best in it. My persecutor died lately, and his debt died with him."

"Then you are free?"

"From my creditor, but not from the prison: there are dues to pay—I scarce know what—I have never even asked—for I am without coin, kindred, or friends."

Dick, in his turn, related the circumstance which

had made him and his companion an inmate of the gaol, and assured the unhappy man not only of the pity and sympathy they felt for his unmerited wrongs, but of the interest they felt assured Captain Vernon would take in his release.

By this time the supper they had paid so extravagantly for was set before them, and they insisted on their countryman sharing it with them. During their repast, several of the prisoners gathered round the table. Some invited them to play—others demanded money, as a sort of fee on their introduction to their society.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE SILVER USED IN PHOTOGRAPHY.—A series of papers addressed by MM. Davanne and Girard to the French Academy of Sciences, on the subject of photography, make some curious revelations with regard to the waste of the precious metals in the operation. The silver alone which is employed for photographs in Paris amounts to several millions of francs. Only 3 per cent. of this remains on the photograph, so that 97 per cent. will continue to be lost until some method be found for recovering it. MM. Davanne and Girard, who make this startling announcement, propose that plates of copper be put into the argentiferous liquid, whereby, in the course of three or four days, the silver will be precipitated in a spongy state.

MORE INCITEMENTS FOR ART WORKMEN.—The council of the Architectural Museum offer a first prize of £20 for the best, and a second prize of £10 for the next best carving of a pulpit panel in oak, the subject being "The Good Samaritan," executed in relief, architecturally treated, and with appropriate mouldings. Note: The use of sandpaper will be considered as a disqualification for the prizes. They also offer a first prize of £10 for the best, and Mr. H. Heather Bigg offers a second prize of £5 5s. for the next best reproduction in silver, on a reduced scale, of a cast in the Architectural Museum collection, representing a group of leaves. The special object of this prize is to encourage hand-tooling or chasing. A prize of £10, given by the Ecclesiological Society and Mr. Beresford Hope, is offered for a small rosette, executed in transparent enamels on silver. The colours are to be of not less than nine separate tints. The silver need not be sunk to a depth of more than 1-30th of an inch. Another prize of £10, given by Mr. Ruskin, is offered for a similar rosette, executed in opaque enamels on a ground of copper; the copper to be hollowed to the depth of not less than 1-16th of an inch, and the metal surfaces to be fire-gilt. It is to be hoped that some of our art-workmen will go in for these premiums, determined to win; not doing what they may think just enough, but everything possible. Any man of ability who does so, and produces a really good thing, may depend on its leading to advancement. The specimens will remain the property of the art-workmen or their employers, and will be exhibited.

TRIAL TRIP OF THE STEAM RAM "SCORPION."—The history of the celebrated rams "El Tousson" and "El Monassar" is well known, and their future career, under the names of the "Scorpion" and the "Wyvern," will also be watched with interest, the greater because of their former history. On Tuesday the "Scorpion" took the builder's trial trip. The "Wyvern" will follow in a few weeks. The following description of the vessels (sister ships) and their armament will be interesting:—Each has length on water line, 224 ft.; beam, 42 ft. 6 in.; depth 20 ft.; measurement about 1,890 tons. Their engines, also manufactured by Messrs. Laird Brothers, are 350-horse power, on the horizontal principle, with double piston rods. The cylinders are 56 in. long, with a 3 ft. stroke. There are four distinct boilers, which may be used separately or together, and 16 furnaces. The whole of the machinery is below the water line. The ordinary hull is of iron, of extra strength; over this is a coating of 10 in. of teak and armour plates $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick, nearly the whole length of the side, but tapering in thickness at bow and stern. The stem curves outwards five feet below the water-line, and being formed of massive wrought iron, forms a ram of immense penetrating force. This prow, as regards the propulsion of the vessel through the water, really forms part of the hull. The stern is shaped with the view of protecting the screw propeller and glancing off shots. The whole arrangements display a great combination of strength. There are two turrets, the greater portion of which is below the main deck, carrying two 12-ton guns each. The plating of the turrets is $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick. The trial was conducted in private, but Messrs. Dinney and Hobbs, Admiralty Inspectors, were present. The "Scorpion," with 200 tons of coal on board, drew 13 ft. forward and 14 ft. 9 in. aft. Her steering qualities were found to be admirable, and she made a complete circle in an average time of five minutes. The speed obtained in running the measured space 0.906 of

a knot, between the Queen's channel Fairway buoy, and the Victoria channel Fairway buoy averaged 10.490 knots. The starting gear of the engines is worked by a small engine, instead of by hand, which gives the engineers a great command over them. In reversing, the plan was found to work admirably.

AN ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH WITHOUT WIRES.—Experiments are now in progress, both at Mont Valerien and Vincennes, for the purpose of testing a new system of electric telegraphy invented by M. Armand Doust, who, it is said, has found means to do away with electric wires altogether, and transmit despatches by the sole action of the earth. A zinc and a copper plate, bent in spindle-like shape, are buried in the ground, with their convexity turned in the direction in which the despatch is to be sent. If there be anything in this, it certainly excels the Dundee electro telegraph (now deceased), who sent messages across Portsmouth harbour without any crossing wire, but by means of wires and plates on either side, extending at right angles to the line of direction across the harbour. This gentleman (Mr. Lindsay, if we mistake not) was confident that merely by means of plates, with wires extending for many miles on either side, a Transatlantic telegraph might be made.

SHRINKING OF STEEL.

A CORRESPONDENT says: As a slight mistake at times is the common lot of all, a few words will not be out of place upon the shrinking of such pieces of work as the mechanic may have had the misfortune of boring too large, and which would be useless, but for the process of shrinking it smaller. Shrinking is simply heating the steel and plunging it in cold water, but should it not prove small enough the first time, the operation must be repeated, and if insufficient the second time, it must be operated upon the third time, which generally effects the purpose. After the third time, I have generally found the hole to cast either oval or bell-mouthed, but after shrinking it the third time, and the article still remaining a waster, there is another source open, which is simply to heat it again, and dip in the water half-way, leaving one half of it above the water, and then to heat it again and dip in the reverse way, half-way in the water; this will often accomplish what other methods have failed to do. Small holes will shrink rather more if the hole be filled with loam; shrinking and expansion of steel vary so much, that I have, at a red heat, shrunk the hole in a steel ring considerably; and at a whitish heat on the same steel the hole has been considerably larger. Iron ring, or collars, may be shrunk after the same manner as steel, by simply heating and cooling in water.

Much might be said upon the various kinds of tools used in the turnery, but there is such a variety of them, differing in form and size according to the necessities, it would take a whole volume to do them justice; some turners are apt to think the tools of their invention best of any, and their attachment to them, not to say bigotry, is often accompanied with a silly attempt to conceal from their fellow-workmen the benefits of their amazing discoveries as to the best shape of a tool; but having had good experience in tools, and their different shapes, I give it as my opinion that the best shape of a tool is a tool that answers the purpose, does the work well, wherewith least steel is cut to waste in the dressing of it, least time required in the grinding of it, and whose wear is longest without repairing.

NITRE BEDS IN SOUTH AMERICA.—M. Boussingault recently communicated to the Academy of Sciences a paper on the nitre beds of Tacunga, in the State of Ecuador. Nitre, or saltpetre, is a substance formed by nature in astonishing abundance; it is to be met with in rain, snow, hail, and fogs; in the water of rivers, and consequently also in the ocean. It is produced in the air and in various soils; but, though found everywhere, it is seldom found in large quantities; the only spot on the globe where it is met with in this shape is Zorapaca, in Peru. Elsewhere this salt makes its appearance spontaneously, producing efflorescences on the surface not unlike vegetation. One day the soil is black and damp; the next is white and crumbles into dust. The saltpetre is collected by sweeping the surface, and if the weather continues fine, a new crop soon appears. It is thus obtained on the banks of the Ganges after an inundation; in Sain they obtain it by lixiviating vegetable mould, which may, therefore, serve the double purpose of a profitable nitre bed or a rich corn field. Tacunga is a town situated 59 min. S. lat. and 80 deg. 10 min. W. long. from Paris; it was built in 1524, on the site of an Indian city; its altitude is 2,860 metres, its mean temperature 15 deg. centigrade. It lies between two rivers, the Alague and the Cutushee, and at the base of the Cotopaxi. Its soil rests on a bed of trachyte and volcanic tufa, and consists of fine sand containing particles of trachyte and pumice-stone. The saltpetre efflorescences on its surface, and is collected as above

described. A kilogramme of dry earth produces 18 per cent. of nitre, independently of nearly 2½ per cent. of nitrogen combined with organic substances. Efflorescence of salt-petre denotes an extremely fertile soil; indeed, M. Boussingault considers fertility and nitrification to be intimately connected; the latter, however, depends in a great measure upon certain atmospheric conditions; thus, dry weather favours it; but damp, and especially rain, will dissolve and wash away the nitre already formed.

FACETIE.

THE SWELL OF THE OCEAN is said to be a dandy shipman.

AN IRISHMAN being asked to define hard drift, said, "It is sitting on a rock and sipping cold water."

A CONTEMPORARY tells us of a sad case of a man who was shipwrecked, and cast upon an uninhabited island, without a shilling in his pocket.

KNOCKING HIS OWN EYE OUT—In the daily papers, a gentleman named Bird advertises that henceforth he means to use the name of "Byrd."

"WHAT! are you drunk again?" "No, my dear, not drunk, but a little slippery. The fact is, my dear, some scoundrel has been rubbing my boots till they are as smooth as a pane of glass."

SCENE AT A FASHIONABLE WATERING-PLACE.

Fashionable Young Gent: "Pray, who is that lady, who has danced all the flesh off her bones?"

Fashionable Old Gent: "That graceful, lithe young creature, sir, is my wife."

A GENTLEMANLY-LOOKING man was mistaken at Bristol for Calcraft, who was expected by rail to officiate in that place, and was mobbed and hooted through the town, to his horror. The mob was far superior to such narrow-minded proceeding as "judging by appearances."

A CERTAIN judge, when called on at a public dinner for a song, regretted it was not in his power to gratify the company. A barrister present observed, "that he was much surprised at the refusal, as it was notorious that numbers had been transported by his lordship's voice."

A FAMILIAR has been published in Paris which proposes an alliance between England, Russia, and France, and that a council of lawyers should for the future be established to settle international disputes. By all means; and let nine-tenths of them be English barristers, to be paid a round sum for their services.

"THE most luxurious smoker I ever knew," says Mr. Paget, "was a young Transylvanian, who told me that his servant always inserted a lighted pipe into his mouth the first thing in the morning, and that he smoked it out before he awoke. 'It is so pleasant,' he observed, 'to have the proper taste restored to one's mouth before one is sensible even of its wants.'"

THUNDER—A traveller was once recounting, with an air of truth some incredible thing, when one of his auditors, vexed at his extravagance, said to him: "But, sir, all that is not much, since I can assure you that the celebrated organist, Volger, once imitated thunder so perfectly that he curdled the milk for three leagues round."

A GOOD joke is told of Horne Tooke, whom the Tories in the House of Commons thought to crush by imposing on him the humiliating task of begging the House's pardon on his knees. Tooke went on his knees, begged pardon for the offensive expression he had used; but in rising up he knocked the dust off his knees, and exclaimed, loud enough to be heard over the whole House, "It's a dirty House, after all!" Roars of laughter followed this exclamation, and the Tories saw clear enough that they had failed in their object.

A SWELL clerk from London, who was spending an evening in a country inn full of company, and feeling secure in the possession of much money, made the following offer:—"I will drop money into a hat with any man in the room. The man who holds out the longest to have the whole and treat the company." "I'll do it," said a farmer. The swell dropped in half a sovereign. The countryman followed with a sixpence. "Go on," said the swell. "I won't," said the farmer; "take the whole, and treat the company."

SOMETHING LIKE HAM—Mr. Menzies, deputy-surveyor of Windsor, it seems, attempted to cure some hams in the old foresters' way, which had died out. On a day when he had a ham cooked he had one of the commoners, reputed to be an excellent judge in these matters, to taste it, and give his opinion as to the success of the curing. "Well, that be pretty like the thing," said the commoner. "I can't taste the like of that this many a day. It is so meller, when you gets your teeth on it, you thinks you has it, but afore

you knows where you is, ain't it vanished?" "Well," said Mr. Menzies, "I am sorry I have something so good in the house, and nobody to dinner to share it with me." "It's a werry different opinion as I would be on that matter," was the sapient reply of the old man. "If that 'ere ham was in my house, it's werry small company as I would ask to the 'atin on it."

A STRANGE medley of names is to be found in the crew of one of the boats at present engaged in the herring fishing at Hopton. The boat is owned by Mr. "Flood," and in company with him is a man known by the name of "Speerit." Of the hired men, the one is named "Gallon," and the other is only known by his nickname, "Brime." This crew have given rise to the saying that the boat sails with the Flood, that fish are caught by the Speerit, measured by the Gallon, and pickled by the Brime.

CHINESE PORTRAIT PAINTERS—If you present yourself as a subject, you are asked the preliminary questions: "How you likey? You likey handsome or you likey likey?" You naturally reply that you wish the portrait to be like you; but woe betide you if, after that announcement, you object to the picture on the score of its ugliness. It is said that a sitter once ventured to do so; the aggrieved artist turned round to the collected audience, and with upraised hands, exclaimed in expostulatory tones: "Suppose no have handsome; how can?" Great was the sympathy evinced for the aggrieved artist, and overwhelming the confusion of the caricatured sitter.

HEAVY CHARGE.

Sir William Armstrong's monster gun.

At Shoeburyness resounds,

To try what damage can be done,

And bang! goes forty pounds.

Good forty pounds at every shot;

Consider of it well;

And also full as much, if not

Much more, for every shell.

What's there to show for this expense

Of powder and of ball?

Hole in a shield, the model fence

Of Ironsides; that's all.

Save proof that if, with skillful aim,

The gun were levelled true,

And Ironsides invading came,

'T would riddle her sides too.

In peace, for practice, we must fight

Imaginary foes;

Since war is ever in our sight;

That's how the money goes.

But how, against invading fleet,

Much faster it would go

Had we an enemy to beat

At forty pounds a blow!

Suppose your gunner's aim to fail,

As oft the case may be;

Your forty pounds, of no avail,

Go plump into the sea.

To such a tune if war require

Our giant guns to play,

Some hundred millions we shall fire

In little time away.

But will the bolt, so pitched aright,

(Which sometimes may betide),

As foreign Ironsides to smite,

And penetrate her side,

Do damage in a measure such

As due proportion bounties?

For oh! it should do very much

Indeed for forty pounds.

Bomb, certain Ironsides to smash,

For dog-cheap we should hold,

Though more its charge were worth, in cash,

Than fulminating gold.

Therefore, come whoever might come,

Prepared we could remain,

Nor need keep firing off the sum.

Of forty pounds in vain.

Punch.

A STRANGE INVITATION.—Some of the young literary men and artists, who, at present, are richer in hope than in fame or fortune, gave a few evenings since a performance of *Macbeth* in a studio in the Rue d'Assas. The ticket of invitation they issued was in these words: "Monsieur and Madame McBeth have the honour to inform you of the painful bereavement they have met in the departure from this life of their trusty lord and cousin, Monsieur Dun Can. You are respectfully requested to honour with your company the last honours they pay their deceased lord and cousin, in which they will be effectually aided by Monsieur Mac Duff, N.B.—Please bring a sperm candle in your pocket, as the family, being in mourning, are very short of light articles." Ridiculous as this ticket of invitation is, the Theatins acted Shakespeare's play admirably.

LUMPKIN AT LEEDS.—Leeds having been selected as the 'Size Town' of the West Riding (on account of

its magnitude, of course), the Judges appeared there for the first time a few weeks since. Immense crowds are reported to have assembled, in order to see the first entry of the magnates of the Bench, and some are spoken of as having their expectations sadly disappointed. One newspaper tells of a country lout, who, after waiting a long time to see their lordships, had his patience rewarded by a good view of the carriage. Thereupon he exclaimed, in a tone of surprise, "Why, it's nobbat a man, after all!" If that particular bunnikin lives to learn more of the doings of the judges at Leeds, he may come to see his error, and discover that he should have said, "It's nobbat an ole 'oman."—*Fun.*

SHARP ON A TRADE.

Ben Brown opened a shop in S—, and in order to hook everybody into trade, he offered to treat every one that bought anything at his store. Money being pretty scarce, there was a good deal of barter going on in those days.

Sam Jones one day called in at the shop of Mr. Brown, and asked for a darning-needle, offering in exchange for the same a good-sized egg. After receiving the needle, Mr. Jones asked if he "Wasn't going to treat?"

"What! on that trade?" asked Brown.

"Certainly; a trade's a trade, let it be big or little."

"Well, what will you take?"

"A glass of wine," said Jones.

The wine was poured out, when Jones said:

"Would it be asking too much to request you to put an egg in this wine? I am very fond of wine and egg."

Appalled by the man's meanness, Brown took the identical egg which he had received for the darning-needle, and handed it to his customer, who, on breaking it into his wine-glass, discovered that it contained a double yolk.

"Look here," said Jones, "don't you think you ought to give me another darning-needle? This you see, is a double yolk!"

A CEREMONY WITH A SANGUINE VIEW.—His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, the other day, bid a confirmation of prisoners in the county jail of Maidstone. Let us hope that none of them will turn out confirmed rogues.—*Punch.*

PRETTY BUTTERFLY!—Alexander Dumas is writing a book called *Essence of Religion*. What a subject for a Frenchman, and a French novelist! He must have made some strange mistake, and fancied that religion is some kind of perfume, sold on the Boulevards. Tell him, somebody.—*Punch.*

THE NEW BREAM DOWN HARBOUR.—We see paragraphs thus headed. What sort of a fish is the new bream, and why does it swim down harbour, and down what harbour does it swim? When Mr. F. Buckland goes out of mourning for the lamented surgeon, we should like the above ichthyological information.—*Punch.*

THE NOBLE ARMY OF YANKERS.—It is said that German worthy, named Karl von Essenghen, at New York, has devised a plan for intercepting the Victoria, communicating with Muller, and enabling him to escape in a fishing-boat and enlist in the army of the United States, for a bounty to be pocketed by Mr. von Essenghen. If Mr. Muller did really murder Mr. Briggs, he will be just the sort of recruit for the Federal Army.—*Punch.*

FAREHAM OF THE CITY.—Coming to a "block" in the streets every ten minutes.—*Fun.*

THE "FLEET" OF THE FUTURE.—The city ter minus of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway.—*Fun.*

SALMON-FISHING!

Friend (on the bank): "Well, Jack! have you had pretty good sport?"

Jack: "Sport! If you call it sport to have no water and no fish, and to pay ninety pounds for three weeks of it, I've had plenty!"—*Punch.*

THE EARLY CLOSING MOVEMENT.—The gentleman who was open to correction has been completely shut-up by an enterprising friend.—*Fun.*

APPROPOS OF THE CONFERENCE.—A story is being told of the Conference, to the effect that the Danish representative, desiring to retain a certain small portion of territory valued by Denmark on account of historical associations, was told by Bismarck that he did not respect sentimental politics, and that "Prussia did not go to war for ideas!" Well, we should have thought her dearth of them the only excuse for going to war, in order to supply the want.—*Fun.*

"YORK, YOU'RE WANTED".—The Lord Mayor of York has accused Colonel Dickson and the officers of the 18th Lancers of a gross breach of etiquette, in not leaving cards at his Mansion House. His lordship has evidently neglected his newspaper education, or he would have known "no cards" formed the rule, and

not the exception. Mayors are so accustomed to present addresses, that it would seem they can make hard cases out of nothing.—*Fun.*

GENEROUS.—It appears that the Prussian government has in the noblest manner offered to relieve Austria of all anxiety about the Duchies. They are prepared to garrison it entirely with Prussian troops—and we imagine (although it is not distinctly so stated) will collect all the taxes and take care of them. How very considerate!—*Fun.*

HORRIBLE BARBARISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—At one of the music-halls two comic singers have been singing twelve comic songs successively for a prize of one hundred pounds, in the presence of an enlightened British public. This appalling exhibition lasted some time, and the state of the nerves of the audience, when all was over, can only be defined in the words of our own penny-a-liner, as being such as "can be much better conceived than described."—*Fun.*

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

To prevent oxen from jumping fences, clip off the eyelashes of the under lids with a pair of scissors, and the ability or disposition to jump is as effectually destroyed as Samson's power was by the loss of his locks. The animal will not attempt a fence until the eyelashes are grown again.

A GOOD FAMILY SALVE.—An excellent remedy for all the various things for which a salve is applied, is made as follows: Resin 1 lb., mutton tallow 4 oz., bees-wax 1½ oz., white lard 4 oz. Melt together, then turn into cold water and let it stand for an hour or two; then make it into sticks.

DEATH FROM THE STING OF A WASP.—A little boy was last week stung between the fingers by a wasp. The usual homely remedies were adopted, but he remained ill during the night, and died the next morning. The best application to allay the pain and irritation arising from the sting of such insects is posas or common soda, mixed with a little oil. Sal volatile is also a useful application.

EXCELLENT STARCH FOR BOSOMS AND COLLARS.—Four a pint of boiling water upon two ounces of gum arabic; cover it, and let it stand over night; in the morning pour it carefully from the dregs into a clean bottle; cork it, and keep it for future use. A tablespoonful of this gum arabic water, stirred in a pint of starch in the usual manner, will give to lawn, either white or printed, a look of newness which nothing else can restore them to after they have been washed.

HOW TO TRAP ANTS.—Houses that are infested with ants, black or red, may be disinfected by a little attention to trapping them. A sponge is one of the best things for the purpose. Sprinkle it with dry white sugar: the sponge being slightly moist, it will adhere. The ants will go into the cells of the sponge after the sugar in large numbers and can be destroyed in hot water, and the sponge squeezed out and sugared again, and returned to the closet for another haul, until all are caught.

STATISTICS.

MORTALITY OF EUROPEANS IN INDIA.—Among the civil servants in India between the ages of twenty and forty-five, the average rate of mortality is somewhat more than 20 per 1,000; the rate being between 14 and 10 in the case of Madras. In England, the mortality amongst men of the same age is about 9 per 1,000. Amongst the natives of all ages, the rate is 51 per 1,000.

HONEY IN FRANCE.—The imports of honey into France in the first five months of 1864 amounted to 111,181 kilogrammes (1,000 kilogrammes go to the English ton) against 19,606 kilogrammes in the corresponding period of 1863. The exports from France in the first five months of 1864, amounted to 207,747 kilogrammes, against 118,449 kilogrammes in the corresponding period of 1863. These figures are certainly larger than might have been anticipated.

The passenger fares charged by the 12 leading railway companies of Great Britain at the close of 1863 were as follows: Caledonian, 1.26d. per mile first-class, 1.18d. second-class, and 0.71d. third-class; Great Eastern, 2.40d. per mile first-class, 1.94d. second-class, and 1.00d. third-class (by express trains, 2.87d. first-class, and 2.00d. second-class); Great Northern, 2.13d. per mile first-class, 1.60d. second-class, and 0.94d. third-class; Great Western, 2.06d. per mile first-class, 1.56d. second-class, and 0.90d. third-class; Lancashire and Yorkshire, 1.58d. per mile first-class, 1.31d. second-class, and 0.76d. third-class; London and North-Western, 1.96d. per mile first-class,

1.44d. second-class, and 0.95d. third-class (by express trains, 2.41d. first-class, and 1.99d. second-class); London and South-Western, 2.40d. per mile first-class, 1.61d. second-class, and 0.98d. third-class (by express trains, 2.68d. first-class and 1.95d. second-class); London, Brighton, and S. th Coast, 1.98d. per mile first-class, 1.47d. second-class, and 0.93d. third-class (by express trains, 2.56d. first-class, and 2.00d. second-class); Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire, 2.48d. per mile first-class, 1.77d. second-class, and 0.97d. third-class; Midland, 2.48d. per mile first-class, 1.72d. second-class, and 0.97d. third-class; North-Eastern, 2.14d. per mile first-class, 1.49d. second-class, and 0.85d. third-class; and South-Eastern, 1.87d. per mile first-class, 1.34d. second-class, and 0.82d. third-class (by express trains, 2.27d. first-class, and 1.68d. second-class).

THE SECOND WOOING.

I had a happy home,
Where cloudless sunbeams shone,
Where groups of thornless roses sprang,
And birds of promise sweetly sang,—
They're desolate and gone.

I have a pleasant home,
Where lingering tendrils twine—
Thine eye could give it light again,
Thy smile disperse its gloom and pain—
Oh! wouldst thou make it thine!

I have a daughter fair,
Who loves on thee to gaze;
Wilt fold her in thy gentle arms,
And show her heavenly Wisdom's charms?
And lead her in his ways?

I have a babe, whose eye
Is like the soft gazelle,
On every side it turns its head
Searching for her, who with the dead
For evermore must dwell.

I have a loving heart,
Now heavy is my breast,
To thee alone it breathes the sigh,
As to some angel of the sky—
Wilt design to give it rest?

L. H. S.

GEMS.

We start in life with a great stock of wisdom, but it grows less the further we go.

Those sentiments of love which flow from the heart cannot be frozen by adversity.

Beauty in women is like the flowers in spring; but virtue is like the stars of heaven.

Truths are first clouds, then rain, then harvests and food. The philosophy of one century is the common sense of the next.

Many calumnies are injurious after being refuted. Like the Spanish flies, they sting when alive, and blister when dead.

Money in your purse will credit you; wisdom in your head will adorn you; but both in your necessity will serve you.

The best method of disposing of half the elders of the age is to pay them no attention. The other half may be lived down.

The more self is indulged, the more it demands; and, therefore, of all men, the selfish are the most discontented.

If you desire to enjoy life, avoid unpunctual people. They impede business and poison pleasure. Make it your rule not only to be punctual, but a little beforehand.

There are many trials in life which do not seem to come from unwisdom or folly. They are silver arrows shot from the bow of God and fixed inextricably in the quivering heart.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Emperor of Russia, it is said, is about to pardon all the Poles not already sent to Siberia. Will they pardon the Emperor?

A SUNFISH, five feet long and three feet wide, was captured on Thursday in Mount's Bay, Penzance, by a party of gentlemen in a yacht.

There is in St. Louis a young lady of 18, who has done nothing but eat and sleep since she was four years old. She is awake for a few minutes twice in the 24 hours, and then talks and eats.

VALUE OF LAND IN THE CITY.—Two freehold houses, on the south side of Old Broad Street, London, were sold by Mr. Henry Marsh, on the

25th ult. The property is held for a term which will expire at Michaelmas, 1872, at the annual rent of £78 12s. 6d., and yet realized £23,500, being at the rate of about £500,000 per acre, or £564 per foot frontage.

The Danes do not seem inclined to diminish their navy. In addition to the vessel just sent from Scotland, an iron-plate ram has been bought in France for 800,000 thalers.

A LARGE quantity of East India and China cotton has been received in Liverpool within the past few days. 49,881 bales in all have been unshipped, of which the greater proportion came from Bombay.

WHAT IS A MILLION?—If a person employed in counting money reckon a hundred pieces in a minute, and continue to work ten hours each day, he will take nearly seventeen days to reckon a million.

LAST week a woman, named Mrs. Eliza Hill, died at the Wotton Almshouse, aged 104. A few years ago her husband died, at the age of 100 years. Mrs. Hill retained her faculties, with the exception of sight, up to the last; but twelve months ago she could both sew and read.

THE 29th of September is, as all true Britons should know, the birthday of the immortal Nelson, who on Michaelmas-day, 1758, first saw the light at Burnham Thorpe. It is also, as all true Britons know, quarter-day. A grand celebration of both events, but in a different way, will take place.

REMOVAL OF THE COLOSSEUM.—It is announced that the Colosseum in the Regent's Park is about to be pulled down. The necessary sanction from the Crown has been obtained for the alterations, which include the erection of a handsome crescent on the park side, and a pantechicon, or warehouse for storing goods, on the Albany Street side.

ELIZABETHAN GARDENING.

THE Elizabethan gardener had no fear but that, if the flowers were varied and plentiful enough, their colours would blend with quite as much beauty as in any artificial arrangement he could devise. He had seen how nature blends her colours on the riverbank, or the woodside, in the open meadow, or the upland path, and he was quite satisfied to let her dispose his colours in like manner. And these he might safely do, for the colours which he had to use, being natural to a temperate climate, and not tropical exotics dragged from their blazing home, were soft and harmonious, and, whatever their arrangement, were sure to produce a satisfactory result.

The best artificial guide to colour arrangement which the gardener can have is the varied play of light which passes through the glass of an ancient painted window, seen from a distance; where the pattern cannot be deciphered, but only a rich mass of colouring perceived.

Probably the nearest approach which European art has made towards pure taste in the use of bright colours is in the old glass which adorns some of our cathedrals and parish churches. The reason for this success is that subject was made subordinate to colour; and the painter rather sought to produce a rich assemblage of colours than to execute a picture better suited to an opaque surface. He felt that he had to deal with the richest colours which human art could produce, and it was his aim to do justice to the means at his disposal, and not to display his skill as a draughtsman.

In dealing with flowers, however, we have this superior facility: that while artificial colour requires artificial treatment, and demand attention to certain rules as to their juxtaposition, Nature's colours always harmonize, if placed near enough together, and we need never be afraid to give them almost any arrangement we please, or in fact—which is better—leave them to take any arrangement which they may happen to fall into. It is a rule, for instance, not to oppose blue and red, and not to ally blue and green: but in a garden we may constantly see these colours blend together in perfect harmony, and with the richest effect, in spite of all our artificial rules.

What, for instance, can be more exquisite, in the spring, than a bed of anemones of every possible colour? or, in the autumn, than a mixed mass of German asters in all their varied hues? What a rich mosaic is a bed of hyacinths, tulips, or pansies; and how exquisitely their various tints weave what Shakespeare calls "a rich scarf for the proud earth."

It is in this blending of colours that the painting of nature so far transcends all that man can do; and this is a secret which the modern pre-Raphaelite has yet to learn, viz., that nature does not pick out her colours, or forms, in separate bits—here a bit of scarlet, there a bit of blue, and there a bit of green; here a leaf, and there a pebble; but she blends them all in one rich whole, so that, with the strictest attention, "we cannot the manner of their mixture spy."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CAPITALD.—The publisher has attended to your order. (See also reply to "E.A.")

E.M.R.—The lines entitled "Waiting for Thee," are declined with thanks.

F. BROWN.—We are unable to insert the verses which you so kindly offer for our acceptance, and they are therefore declined, with thanks.

ARTHUR G.—Handwriting, though large and apparently bold, is wanting in distinctness, owing to the careless formation of the letters, few of which are properly joined.

REV. LEON.—In point of age, you would be qualified to enter the Royal Navy. You must apply, through your friends, to the Admiralty.

J.J.—No.—a master having agreed to pay a certain amount of wages to his servant, cannot compel that servant to accept an equivalent in goods, wares, or anything but money.

J.H.—The term paraffin is derived from the Latin words *parum affinis*, because the strongest chemical agents, except chlorine, have no effect upon it; paraffin oil is a variety of paraffin.

Geo. BRANTINGHAM.—We do not think there is any work published giving the peculiar information which you require. The best for your purpose would, probably, be the various handbooks published by Murray and others.

BENJAMIN sighs for an opportunity of opening a matrimonial correspondence with a fair young lady of seventeen; and intimates that he is eighteen years of age, and 5 ft. 4 in. in height.

C.G.—"London proper" is the "City," distinctively so-called; but speaking of London as the metropolis, the suburban districts coming within the bills of mortality may be understood as implied in the designation.

ELIZA, who is seventeen, dark complexion, considered handsome, and about 5 ft. in height, thinks she would make a good little wife for some one; and in order thereto, would like to open a matrimonial correspondence forthwith.

F. BROWN.—We have no doubt that the "Eos Master" will, in due time, publish in a convenient form the results of his apianian experience, and his suggestions as to the best means of cultivating bees by cottagers.

DAVID D.—We have repeatedly given recipes for strengthening the hair and preventing its falling off; and one of those you will find in our last number, in reply to "Subscriber from the First."

EXCELSION, who is twenty-one years of age, tall, fair, and handsome, desires a matrimonial introduction to a young lady between seventeen and twenty-five years of age, fond of poetry and music, a good housekeeper, and well educated.

T.W.S.—There is not any public institution where, as a sufferer from nervous debility, you would receive better gratuitous treatment than at the Royal Infirmary for Sea-Bathing at Margate. It admits patients from all parts of the kingdom.

JOHN LAMB.—We cannot avail ourselves of the lines entitled "The Maniac;" the subject is neither poetical nor poetically treated. Its faults are, however, pardonable in one who is so very evidently a young and inexperienced writer.

F.P.S.—We can only refer you to the recipe given to "A.H.P." for dyeing the hair or whiskers black, and you must be guided by your own discretion in the use of the ingredients; they must all be pulverised and diluted in the oil used for frying the nuts.

NIL DESPERANDUM.—In order to become qualified as a solicitor, you must serve articles, or become bound to a solicitor who is in practice as such. By this means you will obtain the necessary legal knowledge; you should, of course, also possess a good English education.

INKENMARK.—The elementary arithmetical knowledge requisite for your prospective situation you can readily derive from any of the numerous works on arithmetic, which are as plentiful as blackberries are at this season, and can be obtained at any bookseller's.

P.R.—We doubt very strongly whether a "hawthorn stone" can have remained secreted in the nostril for so long a period as twenty years, and think you must be in error in ascribing to its operation the symptoms which you describe. At all events, it is a case for surgical consideration.

M.A.L.—In all cutaneous eruptions in the face, the following mixture is very useful:—Ipecacuanha wine, four drachms; flowers of sulphur, two drachms; tincture of cardamom, one ounce. A teaspoonful of this mixture should be taken three times a day.

DANCE.—The Tarsiphoros art cannot be properly acquired without receiving practical instruction. If you wish, therefore, to become proficient in the science which has been called "the poetry of motion," you must "take lessons" from some duly competent professor.

A.S.H.—We must go a long way back in history in order to answer your question as to the derivation of the word "sterling." At the time of Charlemagne, the Saxon race was divided into three sections—the Ostfalian, the Westfalian, and the Angarlian, or Angles. The Westfalians were

settled near the Rhine, the Eastfalians near the Elbe, and the Angarlian in the intermediate country watered by the Weser. The name of Westphalia is still in existence; that of Eastphalia has disappeared, but is preserved from the fact that their traders were called in the country Eastfalingers; their money was known by the name name, and being of the purest quality, was accepted universally as the designation of good money—"Eastfaling" becoming shortened into "sterling."

CLAIRETTE is a young lady of twenty-four years of age, with black hair and eyes, brilliant complexion, passionately fond of music, and domesticated; and will be happy to exchange *cartes de visite* with any gentleman who may be disposed to woo and win such a wife.

J.S.—We cannot advise you to waste your time—for it would be virtually wasting it—in endeavouring to qualify yourself to "copy law writings," the remuneration being very small, and employment uncertain. The greater portion of such work is now performed by lithographers.

T.T.—No.—successful candidates for the Civil Service of India are not arbitrarily sent out to the different presidencies. They are permitted to choose, according to the order of merit in which they stand, so long as a choice remains, the particular presidency to which they shall be appointed.

T.S.E.—The Royal Italian Opera House, Covent Garden, was burnt down in 1856 (not 1855), after a masked ball by the Wizard of the North, and the present house was opened in May, 1858. The first structure, built in 1792, was burnt down, in 1803, though rebuilt the following year.

JAMIE, a blonde, aged eighteen, and "Gertrude," a brunette, aged twenty, are desirous of corresponding and exchanging *cartes de visite* with two gentlemen, with a view to matrimony. Both have good incomes, are considered good-looking and amiable, are thoroughly domesticated, and would study to make a home happy.

ELLEN P.—Either silk or satin may be cleaned by using a mixture composed of four ounces of soft soap, four ounces of honey, the white of an egg, and a wineglassful of gin. Brush the article thoroughly with this mixture, using a rather hard brush, then rinse in cold water, let drain, and iron whilst damp.

A.P.D.—The lines being seasonable, and, on the whole, creditable as an amateur production, we insert them willingly:

AUTUMN.

Oh, sing to me of autumn,
In strains of music sweet,
A pleasing, wild, low murmur,
For the ripe autumnal mead;
Sing of its morning glory,
Sing of its golden pride,
A heart-engendering story
Of glorious autumn time.

Oh, sing to me of autumn,
Its long bright evening hours,
Its softly gushing fountains,
And paradise of flowers;
Its rich and radiant hues,
Its leaves of changing green,
Its soft, refreshing dew,
And wealth of golden sheen.

Oh, sing to me of autumn,
When twilight veils the sky,
And brooklets murmur sweetly,
Whilst whistling hulkaby;
The busy bee is flying
To its home far in the gloom,
And softly, scarcely sighing,
We think old thoughts again.

Oh, sing to me of autumn,
When the moon of harvest shines,
And thy loved form enfolding,
I'm seated 'neath the limes;
Where, when the sun was setting,
Oft I have watch'd with thee,
And all beside forgetting
In love's fond ecstasy.

LELY DALE would like to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman who is tall, dark, possesses an income of £250 a year, and is fond of home and music. "Lily" is rather tall, has large blue eyes, light brown, curly hair, excellent nose, small rosy mouth, white teeth; is an accomplished musician and singer, is mistress of £200 a year, and dowered, moreover, with a loving heart.

ARTHUR GRAMM, having just returned from the gold fields of Australia, with sufficient means to live comfortably, finds the only drawback to perfect happiness is the fact that he is a miserable bachelor. Probably some one of our fair readers will take the case of this fortunate but unhappy gold-finder into her kind consideration, and by becoming his wife reconcile him to his wealth and the world in general.

EDITH would be happy to correspond matrimonially with a young gentleman (who need not be excessively handsome, it being "Edith's" opinion that such men are generally very vain of themselves). "Edith" is twenty-two years of age, of medium height, of fair complexion, considered good-looking, a pretty good musician, thoroughly domesticated, and quite capable of managing a home.

ALFRED AND ALBERT, two young non-commissioned staff officers of cavalry, and about to proceed to India, wish to become acquainted with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. "Alfred" is twenty-three years of age and 5 ft. 10 in. in height, dark curly Auburn hair, hazel eyes, and good-looking. "Albert" is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, jet black hair, eyes, and monastic, and considered handsome.

BELLA signifies to all and sundry bachelors of fortune, who are also tall, dark, handsome, and gentlemanly, and have proclivities towards matrimony, that she will be delighted to open a correspondence matrimonial. "Bella" is of medium height, a particularly pretty blonde, a remarkably good musician and vocalist; possesses at present an income of £250 per annum, and on the death of a relative will receive the sum of £1,000.

R.E.M.—Black silk may be revived thus:—Into water in which logwood has been boiled for half-an-hour, place the silk, and boil for the same time; then take it out, and put into the dye a very little green copperas, cool it, and simmer the silk again for another half-hour. Or you may boil a

handful of fig leaves in two quarts of water until it is reduced to a pint; then squeeze the leaves and bottle the liquid for use, and when wanted, apply it with a sponge.

AN ANXIOUS WIFE.—We do not think there is any legal ground for your anxiety. It would have been more correct for your husband to have given his name as "Henry" instead of "Harry"; but as the name is the recognized equivalent for the other, the difference would not invalidate the marriage.

HENRY CAMPBELL is a bachelor who wishes to become a Benedict monk further loss of time. He is 5 ft. 10 in. in height, has very dark hair, wears beard and moustache, is muscular, well-educated, good-tempered, and possesses an income of £250 a year. The lady (age from thirty to forty years) must be fairly educated, fond of music, and affectionate. Exchange of *cartes de visite* an indispensable preliminary.

WILLIAM HOON.—You probably know that a critic on the sacred books should be candid and learned, dispassionate and free; and such may be your own qualifications; but we must decline entering upon anything like a theological disquisition. The expression respecting glass was, probably, the most expressive and familiar simile that occurred to the translator of the "Revelations."

S.T.—So far from your impression being correct, a person who receives a married woman into his house, and allows her to remain there after receiving notice from the husband not to harbour her, is liable to action for damages. If, however, the husband turned his wife out of doors, or compelled her by his misconduct to leave him, the person receiving her would have a claim against the husband for maintenance.

EVA BEATRICE MAUD W.—To improve the complexion, flowers of sulphur, mixed with milk, is very beneficial. Mix a little of both together, let the mixture stand an hour or two; then take the milk without disturbing the sulphur, and, before washing, rub into the skin, which it will render soft and clear. Make the mixture overnight, with evening milk, to use next morning, but not afterwards. The name Gertrude is from the German, and signifies "all truth."

LILY.—To have an "admirer at whose simplicity everybody laughs," is certainly an uncomfortable position for you. But if he is a worthy fellow, albeit a Cymon, what does it matter who laughs at his unsophisticated manner? The real question for you is, do you love him well enough to jolt your future life with him? If you do not, you will, of course, best consult your present feelings, and the future happiness of both, by breaking off the acquaintance.

A SUBSCRIBER.—A man becomes an outlaw when he keeps out of the way to avoid process of law in the superior courts, so that the sheriff who holds a warrant against him makes a return that the person is not to be found in his bailiwick or jurisdiction, and a similar return is made from every county in England. An outlaw has no legal rights whatever—the law strips him of everything except life and limb; all his property is confiscated, and he is deprived of his liberty whenever he can be found in England.

N.T.—Candidates for the education department of the Civil Service are not, we believe, examined by the Civil Service Commissioners between the end of August and the middle of October. If, therefore, the work of your district requires that an inspector's assistant should begin to act in it before the middle of October, your recommendation must be made at once, in order that the name, if approved by the Lord President, may be forwarded to the examiners before the 20th instant.

JAMIE.—We nearly lost our patience whilst perusing your letter, prettily written and perfumed though it were. We must tell you frankly that daughter should be brought up from the first with the conviction that it is incumbent on all persons to minister as well as to enjoy, to be practically useful in whatever position of life they are; and that a woman's true sphere of usefulness, and let us add, of enjoyment, is at home, and in the discharge of home duties.

T.Y.—Admission to Christ's Hospital School is obtained on recommendation of a governor of that institution. If you are such a poor man as you represent yourself to be, there is not much probability of your succeeding in obtaining admission for your son, although the school was specially endowed for the education of the sons of poor men. The sons of rich or well-to-do men only gain admission; but the parents must still formally "declare" that they are poor. A list of the governors who have presentations for this year can be obtained at the hospital for 1s.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—"The Last Rose of Summer" would like to correspond with the "Gentleman Volunteer." She is tall, dark, and handsome, is most respectably connected, fond of company (but thinks, nevertheless, she would make a loving wife), and is in possession of £150 per annum. "Tilly" and "Annie," two sisters, would have great pleasure in corresponding with "William" and "George." "Tilly" is twenty years of age, fair complexion, and blue eyes; "Annie" is eighteen years of age, and of the same type of beauty; both are accomplished and domesticated, but do not boast of fortune or "great expectations."—"W.S." replies to "Alice" and "Emily" that, like Captain Macbeth, he thinks "he could be happy with either," and will be glad to correspond matrimonially with one of them.—"Rose," feeling convinced that "C.N." and herself are mutually suitable to be joined "for better for worse," would like to hear further from him.

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